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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, PEARLS OF VIEWS

Senate wants to limit local, foreign borrowings

Sunday, September 12, 2004 ▲ 24 pages | vol. 19 / no. 211
website: www.inq7.net

Solons to scrap all pork

House leaders say they're taking 'moral, political high ground'

By Cynthia D. Balana

SMILES! President Macapagal-Arroyo and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo are all smiles as they exchange pleasantries with newlywed royals Al-Muhtadee Billah Bolkiah and Sarah Salleh before the wedding banquet Friday at the royal palace. The groom is heir to the Brunei throne. The First Couple, who were wedding sponsors, returned to Manila yesterday.

HEROES FOR HEALTH

Five doctors who followed their dreams

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

FLOWERS hang from the fence overlooking the gaping hole where once stood the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. The third anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks brought to the fore the problem of the children orphaned by the tragedy.

Troubled children of 9/11: Legacy of loss

A3
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2004
WEATHER FORECAST
Second FRONTPAGE

US experts help RP stamp out terror

By Fe Zamora

EXPERTS from the United States are helping the Philippine military formulate an antiterrorism defense framework that would help stamp out the country's image as a terrorist haven, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz said yesterday.

Cooperation in fighting terrorism gained impetus following Thursday's lethal bombing of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia, which cut short chords on the commemoration by the United States and its allies of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against US landmarks.

Militant groups in Manila and Baguio City marked the day with protest marches to denounce the US military presence in Iraq, but there was no violence.

Cruz said in an interview with the Inquirer that antiterrorism would be a pillar in the framework of the Philippine Defense Reform program and would be similar in programs used in Thailand, Southeast Asia and Indonesia.

He said the government of the US forces already in the country should also be sent in point that relations between the two allies had not been impaired by the early withdrawal of Philippine troops from Iraq, where US-led forces are waging a war against Iraqi militants.

AFP will have final say

Cruz said the US "consultants" were here "to lend their experience" and were working with the office of Defense Undersecretary Ernesto Carolina, a retired general in charge of instituting defense reforms.

"They [consultants] are giving us the templates, and these are being adapted to Philippine conditions," Cruz told the Inquirer.

"At the end of the day, it will be the Armed Forces that will decide," he said.

Cruz said he had no qualms about asking for help from Western allies, including the United States, in the hunt for the Philippines' elusive terrorists.

'Vigilance more than ever'

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said her government would not be pressed by terrorists.

"We will not let them vent us or intimidate us," she said in a statement.

"We are going after the remaining leaders and operatives and dismantling their networks. We would use them through intensified and continuous cooperation among our neighbors and allies," she said.

Just after the Jakarta bombing by suspected Jemaah Islamiyah militants, Philippine military and police forces raised their alert levels and tightened security around key embassies and other potential targets.

GMA must apologize

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said Philippine embassies abroad had also been asked to "take all necessary precautions for its personnel and premises against possible terrorist attacks."

"More than ever, we need the vigilance of every Filipino to participate any strikes and to intercept any remaining terrorist cells that may be planning mayhem," Ate Arroyo said.

She said the remaining terrorist cells in the country had been "largely decimated with the capture of its leaders and the constant neutralization of their activities."

In a press march marking the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks on the United States, members of militant groups in Baguio City urged Ate Arroyo to apologize to the Iraqi people for her government's support of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Carrying an effigy of Uncle Sam straddling a globe, activists of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) said an apology by Ate Arroyo could shield overseas Filipinos from attacks.

Jeanette Tadeo, secretary general of Bagong-gan it Gindi, a group affiliated with the CPA, said overseas Filipinos had not forgiven the troops despite her decision to pull Philippine troops out of Iraq.

Flora Belleza, an official of the Migrante party-list group, said an apology from the Philippine government should convince Islamic extremists that overseas Filipino workers were not their enemies.

In Metro Manila, the Sept. 11 anniversary passed without incident.

Shopping malls were open, stores ran smoothly, and families strolled along the Baywalk in Manila. But police were also everywhere in the city.

Peaceful protest

Militants groups were had along UN Roblox Secretary to demand the US withdraw its troops from Iraq but the protest was peaceful.

The group Peace Camp Collapsed for Peace and Social Justice mounted the base of Two Burning One World Trade Center of tanks and rallied for justice for the victims.

The group also denounced the US invasion of Iraq as a bigger act of terrorism. With reports from Bill C. Esberanguez Jr., Jaime R. Salaverria, Vincent Cabreza, Phil Northern Lizon Bureau

City governments agree to give up part of their IRA

By Michelle V. Ramos, Business and Carlo P. Cueto, PDI Visayas Bureau

CITY governments have agreed to give up a portion of their budgets to help finance the country's own rebuilding fiscal problem.

After earlier opposing proposed cuts in the budgets of local government units (LGUs), the League of Cities, composed of 115 city governments nationwide, passed a resolution on Friday giving up half of their share in the P50-billion increase in the internal revenue allotment (IRA) approved by Congress for 2005.

"We want to show that we are supportive of the measures taken by President Macapagal-Arroyo to solve the fiscal situation. This is our contribution to the country's recovery efforts," said Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, who is also president of the League of Cities.

23 percent share

According to the General Appropriations Act approved by Congress for 2005, city governments are entitled to 23 percent of the 1068 for local governments. Provincial governments have a 22 percent share, while municipalities and barangays have a 34 percent and 21 percent share, respectively.

The 2005 IRA approved by Congress amounts to P131 billion, or P30 billion higher than the IRA for 2003 and 2004 of P101 billion. With its 23 percent share, city governments were to get P23 billion from the additional P30 billion budget for LGUs.

With the resolution passed by the League of Cities, city governments agreed to get only half of the P23 billion increase or P11.51 billion.

Treñas said the units have been giving up half of their share, the League of Cities would also try to convince other LGUs, like members of the Union of Local Authorities in the Philippines (Ulap), to do the same.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said that although the national government was hoping that the LGUs would forego the whole P30-billion increase in 2004, any amount they would have the 2004 IRA of P71.45 billion remained for 2005... due P5 billion

Boncodin said that although the national government was hoping that the LGUs would forego the whole P30-billion increase in 2004, any amount they would have the 2004 IRA of P71.45 billion remained for 2005... due P5 billion cut was a welcome proposal.

"We initially wished for more, but we are grateful for the move to give up a portion of their share," Boncodin said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon, however, said the IRA share of LGUs could not be reduced unless the President declared a state of unmanageable budget deficit.

Budget deficit

"I don't think she has any plans (to make such a declaration) at this point. Measures are being undertaken in order that the budget deficit could be managed," he said.

The current budget Director-General earlier urged Secretary to the President and to Congress approving the proposed reduction of the IRA of LGUs as part of the government's austerity measures.

Mandaue Mayor Manuel Jaboneta III, chair of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines-Negros Occidental chapter, said that if LGUs would be required to help solve the current fiscal crisis, it should not be at the expense of needed services in the towns.

The Negros Association of Chief Executives Inc. said that reducing the IRA would impair the delivery of basic services.

The Municipal Mayors League of the Philippines in Negros Occidental also objected to a proposal by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda to cut the LGUs' IRA share by P50 billion to next year's budget.

In a resolution passed Wednesday, the mayors sounded the necessity of their league for appointing a resolution favoring a cut in their IRA without their consent.

Proposed cuts

The proposed cuts, the Negros Oriental mayors said, would greatly jeopardize existing programs and undermine the operations of LGUs that are depending solely on their IRA shares.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel also called on local executives in Mindanao Oriental to oppose the IRA cuts of LGUs because it would fundamentally threaten the country's 79 provinces, 131 cities, 1,496 municipalities and 41,950 barangays. With reports from Ben Rif and Jaime Arnada, PDI Visayas Bureau

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COLLEGIATE LEVEL

SCHEDULE OF APPLICATIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

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Mondays to Saturdays
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(UST Application and Grades Form may be downloaded from the UST Website: www.ust.edu.ph and may be reproduced)

Examinations
MANILA
Sept. 19, Oct 24 and Nov. 28, 2004
Sundays – 08:00 to 11:30 AM / 01:00 to 04:30 PM

PROVINCIAL
Oct. 09 and 16 / Nov. 06, 13 and 20, 2004
Saturdays – 08:00 to 11:30 AM

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College of Commerce and Accountancy** (Accountancy (COA), Business Administration (COA), Economics, Entrepreneurship)
College of Education** (Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Food Technology, Hotel and Restaurant Management, Nutrition and Dietetics, Teaching, Master of Arts in Teaching Social Science (5-year program), Teacher's Certificate Program)
Faculty of Engineering* (Electronics and Communications Engineering (COE), Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Industrial Engineering (all five programs are on COD status), Information Management, Information Technology, Computer Science)
College of Fine Arts and Design (Advertising, Industrial Design, Interior Design, Painting)
Conservatory of Music (COE)
College of Nursing* (COE)
Faculty of Pharmacy** (Pharmacy, Medical Technology***, Pharmacy***)
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Oct. 16, 2004	T. de Rosario College, Batangas, Batangas
Nov. 06, 2004	Holy Spirit Academy Laoag, Fatima Spirit Apostolic University, Laguna City St. Paul University, Tuguegarao City
Nov. 13, 2004	San Pedro College, Davao City St. Alexander's Academy, Baconsil City Holy Trinity College, Palawan University of La Salette, Santiago City Holy Rosary Technical Institute, Tarlac
Nov. 20, 2004	Angelicum School, Iloilo City Notre Dame of Cotabato, Cotabato City Sacred Heart School, Naawan City Immaculate School, Dagupan City Phil. Maritime College, Nueva Ecija
Nov. 27, 2004	St. Paul College, Bacolod, Negros

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METRO

Editor: Carmen B. Pedrosa, Peter G. Dipasupil

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WPD investigators want out of homicide unit

By Leila B. Salaverria

FOURTEEN Western Police District homicide investigators asked yesterday to be transferred out of their units.

Police said the men, all but one of them lieutenants, want to learn new things by seeking reassignment to the following units: traffic, police community relations, and the anti-illegal drugs unit.

Police said the men, who have been in their units for at least two years

Resigning lawmaker could face criminal raps

THE MAN once dubbed the "Pacquiao congressman" may face criminal charges if his panties through with his resignation from the House of Representatives.

Bohol Rep. Eladio Jala and yesterday Zamboanga Rep. Antonio Diaz may be held "criminally liable for resigning to run for another elective office without a legal mandate," after Diaz decided to quit when he was not named a House deputy speaker.

But his pair, Iranun senator and chief of the Muslim group Muslim Mindanao Congress said: "I don't know what law authorizes a congressman to resign by a reason such as disappointment because he did not get a position he wanted."

Signaling in a statement, cited a provision in the Revised Penal Code which says that imprisonment or a fine not exceeding P1,000, or both, "shall be imposed upon any person who, having been elected by popular election to a public office, shall refuse without legal excuse to ... discharge the duties of said office."

Majority leader Prospero Nograles said Diaz had until Tuesday to reconsider his decision. Nograles chairs the House committee on rules which will meet on that day to deliberate on Diaz's letter.

Unless Diaz withdraws his resignation, the committee will have no choice but to endorse it to the plenary, Nograles said.

Diaz said in a radio interview one of the reasons he was resigning was the failure of Speaker Jose de Venecia to name him as one of the House deputy speakers.

A second reserve supposedly was let out being able to obtain 'gods' hand. Ed Rivadulla, Gloria A. Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau

Gov't execs at meet

LEADERS' evaluation experts in the Asia, Britain, Russia, Japan and Hawaii administration will discuss governance issues at a forum on Sept. 13 at 1:30 p.m. at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin, Sen. Luis Villafuerte, Bayanan Diokno, Administrator Enrique K. Ayson, Civil Service Commission Chair Karina David will address the first Diliman Governance Forum organized by the National College of Public Administration and Governance at the SCAG Assembly Hall.

The discussion will center on "Renewing, Reengineering and Reorganizing the Bureaucracy in the Philippines: Why We Should/Do Must Reinvent?" and marks the formal launch of the Diliman Governance Hall, a project of PhP 20,000 from of Dean Mel Bellosillo.

Interested parties may contact Dir. NCPAG Director Office through TU Telephone at 920-3961 or Assistant Rey at 9205-420-0430.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Sunday SPORTS
Editor Teddy Ac S. Molondres

PBA bares Asiad, ABC mechanics

By Jane Navarro

BETS the World Championship and the Olympics in mind, the Philippine basketball association has come up with the mechanics for the formation of the national team that will be tasked to regain the country's prominence position in Asia.

The PBA proposal, which will be presented to the Basketball Association of the Philippines for approval, calls for the creation of a national team from a training pool composed of two teams under the watch of one national coach and a host of assistant coaches.

A maximum of 21 players, most likely PBA imports to be chosen by the national coach, will form the elite training squad while the other training team will be composed of 15 to 20 players.

In close coordination with the SBP, the PBA will choose the national coach from a short list of choices with emphasis on his ability and capacity to seriously devote his time to the formation of a formidable national squad.

Amateur players will make up the core of the other training team with about five to six PBA players considered as future prospects joining them. The national hires a coach of its own who will also sit as deputy to the head coach in the elite squad.

The PBA has set a maximum age limit of 25 for the members of training pool B with a maximum playing capital of four years. By that time, the players should either be in the elite team or dropped from the team.

The elite squad or Team A will see action in the Asian Games, ABC Championship and possibly the World Championship and the Olympics while Team B will play in tournaments within the Southeast Asian region, particularly the SEA Games and the SEABA.

The PBA started sending its stars to the Asian Games in 1982 and won India forward to also fielding a team in the ABC, which is the qualifying tournament for the world championship and the Olympics.

PBA commissioner Noli Eala and BAP secretary general Graham Lim are scheduled to meet within the week to iron out what could be the beginning of a real comprehensive basketball program for the country.

Tams No. 1; playoff for 2nd

[illegible]

By Jasmine Vi Paya

IT was indeed the most opportune time to make the No. 1 spot.

Arwin Serios flashed an all-around performance with 15 points, 10 rebounds and five blocks as the Far Eastern Tamaraws dislodged the defense England from the top position with an unexpected 65-53 nod to become the first team to earn the twice-to-beat advantage in the 67th UAAP varsity basketball tournament yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We really wanted the top seed before entering the Final Four. We were down at the half but we recovered. At halftime, we were a changed team. [about to ga] ginagalaw namin [allow hard work]. It showed in the second half," said FEU coach Koy Banal after finally wresting sole lead-ership at the end of the eliminations with an 11-3 record.

FEU will clash with fifth seeding just a win on Thursday to reach the finals.

But before that, archrivals Ateneo and De La Salle will dispute the No. 2 spot and the other twice-to-beat incentive on Tuesday and then collide again on Thursday in the other Final Four pairings.

And the possibility of a third straight Angles-derbies clash is not discounted.

If the winner of Tuesday's match fails to repeat on Thursday there will be a rubber match to decide who gets to the other championship slot.

The Eagles and the Archers wound up with similar 10-4 records.

In the other action game, the Adamson Falcons closed their campaign with a sixth-place finish as it fell after downing the UST Tigers, 72-63.

The Tigers dropped to seventh at 4-10.

Thirdgame (3rd)

FEU (65) – Serios 15, Miranda 11, Nimes 8, Arp 8, Cruz 7, Nuyad 5, Labor 5, Gamot 2, Gonzales 2, Manuel 2, Mangahas 2, Adolfo 0.

ADMU (53) – Kapp 16, Torres 7, Barroca 6, Abad 5, Arp 4, Dichoso 4, Cardona 4, Rivera 4, Ng 2, Ignalo 0, Dionisio 0, Quinsay 0.

Quarters: 15-11, 33-23, 49-38, 65-53

WHAT'S INSIDE

Palace, militants, solons reject tax on OFWs

By Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr., Marinell Marfil and Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG, militant groups and legislators yesterday opposed proposals to tax the $8 billion annual remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) whose earnings have kept the economy afloat, particularly after the 1997 Asian currency crisis.

Many of our last meeting, we are only looking at or discussing about eight priority tax measures and this [the OFW tax] is not one of them," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in an interview over DZRH radio.

Akbay Rep. Jory Bidenla, a member of the committee on ways and means, warned that taxing OFW remittances would be no different from taxing exports and both would have dire consequences on the economy.

"OFWs are considered as export because it makes up for our limited attraction as an investment site," Bidenla said. "Without their remittances, the flood crisis would have long exploded into a literal big bang."

"This trial balloon will not save fly, we have to shoot it on the ground," he added.

Solons said the government may be seeking to raise at least P4 billion by taxing their remittances but the move would jeopardize $8 billion in inflows from the OFWs.

Fallback measure

Earlier, Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong proposed the reinstatement of the gross income tax on OFWs as a fallback revenue measure should Congress fail to pass the President's eight priority revenue-enhancement measures that would raise an additional P86 billion in revenues.

These include the P1 per liter hike in excise tax on oil products; imposition of taxes on cigarettes and alcohol; revising the value-added tax shift from net to gross income taxation; a list minority; an onerous system for government agencies; imposition of franchise tax telecommunication firms; and rationalization of fiscal incentives.

The OFWs used to pay a gross income tax of 2 percent on their earnings but this was discontinued in 1997 when the comprehensive tax reforms program was implemented.

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and militant groups also warned against taxing OFWs.

Newly designated OWWA Administrator Rhumatic Hagan said the government should first discuss the plan with OFW leaders and communities before outrightly the gross income tax on OFWs.

"The expect remittances because they [OFWs] were exempted then suddenly, we'd be withdrawing that benefit. Annually, if government pushes through with the plan, the administration of either will be in big historic," Hagan said in a telephone interview.

He pointed out that the proposal to tax OFWs could become a "problem" as it would entail posing over millions of estimate to determine how much each individual worker should be taxed.

Massive protests

The militant group Migrante said all tax proposals by the administration would be met with massive protests by workers here and abroad.

"Excuse me, but are OFWs to blame for the country's fiscal crisis? Secretary Amatong is ignoring many realities that include the erroneous Filipino notion's pet panacea efforts to help keep the 'bumbong economy afloat," Cristy Hagan-Bagtalo, Migrante chair, said.

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WRITERS AND THEIR HEROES

The Ealing Pilipino Movement (EPM) announced recently the winners of its "The Hero(es) of My Generation" student essay-writing contest. Second runner-up Jalyn Bolotol of Technological Institute of the Philippines (third from right) receives a plaque and a cash prize from Dr. Nicanor Tiongson, UP Diliman dean and chair of the board of judges, and EPM president Orly de Guzman, for her essay entitled "Nick, the Nationalist." Witnessing the awarding are sponsors Maria Prieto (right), chair of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, EPM trustee Ramon Garcia and Chowking HRD director Angel Santiago.

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THE RADIM SISTERS
Religious of Notre Dame of the Missions

RP-Youth Burlington team departs today for ABC tournament in India

MANGIT Chea (middle), marketing executive of LA Gear, recently visited a practice session of the University of Santo Tomas Salinggawi Dance troupe to express her firm's all-out support in the nine consecutive bid of the back-to-back UAAP Cheerdance Champion

FIVE Tolentino Tots products will bounce the RP-Youth Burlington team bowling today to compete in the 18th ABC Junior Men's Championship to be held Sept. 14-23 in Bangalore, India.

They are Mark Angelo Cardoz, Jerry Cruz, Dylan Abadoza and Darryl Bautista, all from the University of Santo Tomas, and Alvin John Guinaoran of Philippine College of Criminology.

Cardoz, is the tallest at 6-foot-5, Cruz is 6-3 while Abadoza and Bautista are both 6-1. Guinaoran is 6-flat.

"Our nationwide search for tall, young players has been fruitful. Now, they're given the rare opportunity to represent the country internationally," said Dely and Rudy Tan, president and general manager, respectively, of Angelean RP-Youth bowler Burlington stable.

The Tolentino Tots products will be coached by Tots Bolo and Tots Ramos, the latter a former Philippine Team member.

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Cards shock Cebu Tribes

THE BALUD Cardinals exploded for 22 points in the final quarter to halt Tribu Jinglers (Cebu Tribes) seven game winning streak, 103-81, Friday in the MBC Multipurpose Basketball Court in the mineral city of Baguio.

The Baguio-based Mineralites, 70-61, going into the payoff period and one fifth placer, 77-75, with 9:41 left when the Cardinals' of PB president Jun Bautista sunk a crucial eight-straight points while holding the Cebuanos scoreless until the last 38.5 seconds to score their fifth win in 11 games.

Coach Andy Gallegos's Cagayan de Oro shoot had their start to finish to beat the reigning Batangas Tibers, 81-71, at the Xavier University gym.

Blair Tolentino took four triples en route to 19 points that sparked the final win.

Del Rosario clinches Singapore Open title

SINGAPORE—Filipino top seed Liza del Rosario dumped Malaysian Zandra Azlida, 104-107, Thursday night to win the women's crown of the 27th Singapore International Open at Victor's Superbowl.

It was the first time outboard title for the world championship gold medalist this year.

The 27-year-old Zandra settled for second after disposing off teammates Shalin Zulkifli (139) and Wendy Chan (166) with 202 in the second stepladder finals match. Zandra, who was awarded sixth seed the first match, defeating Queenie Angela Wing Ya Ling (279) and another Filipina, Liza Dawe (198).

Del Rosario had earlier topped the second block with 1500 shoot of converse brace No. 1 Zulkifli, who won second last PYGOS one-by-with 1490. ABF Tour Malaysia by champion Chan was third with 1446.

Wong (1501), Chanda (1507) and Zulaika Azlida (1522) made the cut for the stepladder finals from fourth to sixth positions respectively. First block leader Sinara Ali Rajo missed the cut by five pins to finish seventh on 1517 while defending champion Evelyn Chan took eighth place with 1502.

Making top seed Tan block of the United States scored a 197-194 win over Malaysian Daniel Lin to top the nine's crown, where the Philippines' Chester King failed to make the finals.

The ex-PBA bowler, who turned professional after winning a gold medal in the 2000 World Championship, rather lagged the ABF Base London International before nailing two in Singapore for the tournament.

Lin came close in climbing his first-ever Singapore Open title when he dramatically defeated second-seed Aaron Robinson of Australia and third-seed Mahesh Al Mandhiri of Qatar in the second stepladder match.

Azuli Amman scored the cut by finishing seventh with 3434 while first block leader Sing finished out in the second block to finish tenth with 3408.

LIZA del Rosario calls to her first international victory this year

BOMBO

Seminars spice up Golf Show

DEFENDING online golf-related topics will be conducted by the Philippine Tourism division as to one of the highlights of the Philippine International Golf Show 2004 on Oct. 8-10 at the SMX Megamall in Mandaluyong.

Experts in various fields like travel and entertainment, in addition, tournament handling and rules will be on hand to the exhibit, which is an annual project of the Golf Federation Association of the Philippines.

Exhibit chair Lorell Gopez said the seminars are GEAP's way of helping boost the needs of those handling their respective tasks.

Gopez hinted that bookings for the show have been set and they are now in the final stages of preparations with exhibit manager PrimeMovers.

More than 80 companies in equipment and apparel distributors and related businesses in golfing turf hardware, travel, media, golf resorts and restaurant are joining this year's show.

Ordering to this event is the 92nd International on Sept. 27 at the Manila Golf Club. For details, visit www.philippinegolfshow.com, log on to or call 888 at 779-6688 or 840-1224 or email golfshow@primemovers.com.ph

Eagle Ridge tilt lures 200 teams

SEVERAL hundred of 200 homes will dispute prizes worth at least P5 million, including three brand new Honda Civic prototypes, in the second Eagle Ridge Invitational, the membership golf tournament of the sprawling Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite slated Sept. 23-25.

The roster of members and their guests will be out for top awards in three divisions according to average handicaps.

Globe Hardware, Mercer Construction and CSD Construction make up the trio of major sponsors for the invitational jointly hosted by the Alsons Land Corp. and Ms. Lucia Bradley.

For inquiries, call 646-4722/641, 646-4722/33, 82-7424266, 0927-6247389 or 0921-3679695. Registration is still ongoing at Eagle Ridge and is set to close on 17 September.

Dagupan cycling kicks off

DAGUPAN Commissioner Alpin Bernardo Jr. will be the guest of honor and speaker of the Dagupan Cycling Tour Championship today in a 33-lap race around landmarks and attractions to highlight the tourism and investment programs of Dagupan City.

Pangasinan cyclonist known as pioneer of local cycling including Speaker Jose de Venecia, Gov. Victor Agbayani, former Mayor Benjamin "Benbot" Villar Jr., Rep. Amado T. Espino Jr., University of Pangasinan president Leon Dupaya, PGP Provincial Director Mario Sandiego, former Gov. Oscar Orbos and DPWH regional director Fidel Ginez are expected to attend the cycling event.

Race director Jose Garcia, Bangalisan's cycling icon and two-time Tour of Luzon champion, said the powerhouse cycling town wanted to the Dagupan race include Arnel Pacsiral, Ryan Tongpiling, Steve Bajenio, Mercedes Ramos, Eder Rocles, Eric Orbos, Reynaldo Noveras, Enrique Domingo and Glenn Bernardo, now among the best riders in the country.

Garcia is confident the involvement of a big delegation of national cycling officials and sponsors including Phil. Cycling Association, Philly 87 Team, Pepsi, Darlington and many other participant companies. Cycling official Lee Alvarez confirmed that based on the expected magnitude and quality of the Dagupan Tour, plans are afoot to officially list it as a annual event in the roster of federation-organized races annually.

Madrigal new karting darling

AFTER winning her third straight leg on the Shell Super Karting Series recently, 8-year-old Alexandra Madrigal has become the new toast of the local karting world.

Madrigal, a Filipino-American daughter of Fred and Tess Madrigal, races in the Cadet class (blue category) of the Shell Super Series.

She won her first race last March at the Carmona Karting Circuit in Laguna. Racing recently against nine to 13-year-olds, Madrigal raised both hands in triumph in the final lap of the 15-lap race to top the 15-year field. She was the only girl in the competition.

After skipping the April leg, Madrigal returned in May and again won the Cadet class. She then bagging a spill in the second leg before securing the finish line first by a wide margin.

Madrigal now has taken part but July.

MADRIGAL: Toast of karting

Extreme 4x4 goes on in Bicol

THE BICOL Region becomes the fulcrum of off-roading in the country when the 3rd leg of the Isuzu Extreme Endurance 4x4 Series erupts today in Polubrinda, Naga City, with practically all of the big names in this extreme motorsport in attendance.

Led by last year's Off-Roader of the Year Robert Mina, tournament leader Tito Enriquez and legendary off-roader Brad Brandt in one of Team Dobi Sports, the 3rd leg promises more heart-stopping action from the corner of the map to the 4x4 racing.

"It will be a race to bring the machines for the 4x4 eventually, the national championship. This is the 3rd tournament that really matters because of its tech factors, status and prestige," said Jojo Primo, president of the leading 4x4 Off-Roaders Club.

It has said he has prepared some courses that is a challenge for motorcycle and motorized units.

House leaders claim solons to scrap all pork

From page A1

he had doubts declaring the signatories' agreement to have the 2005 pork barrel allocation of the House totally abolished.

Deal alliance, the House deputy director general for public affairs, said the decision to abolish the pork barrel had been taken even before Aquino sent his letter to De Venecia.

De Venecia said he had discussed the proposal to abolish the pork barrel system with Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin and she did not pose any objections.

The pork barrel is money allocated in the annual budget by the national government to each Legislator for projects of their choosing in legislative districts with their constituents.

Each House member receives P60 million in pork barrel funds, officially called the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF), while each senator gets P200 million.

According to De Venecia, projects in the legislators' constituencies would now be chosen according to the priorities set by the Presidents in her 10-point social and economic program.

Still solons' choice

Alfonso explained that House representatives would still be allotted to identify development projects in their districts but they would now have to justify their choices and the amounts to be allocated for each project during the congressional budget hearings.

House leaders will be canvassing in all members caucus next week to approve the new agreed-on proposals for plenary approval.

De Venecia expressed confidence that the new proposals would be supported by all the 230 House members when they are presented for consideration next week.

Some of the House leaders present at the caucus included Deputy Speakers Benigno Aquino III (1st District, Lanao Sur), Raul del Mar (Cebu City), Rodolfo Antiño (Lubao, Pampanga), and Raul del Mar (Cebu, Cebu City); Rodolfo Antiño (1st District, Camarines Sur), chair of the House committee on appropriations, and Robert "Bert" Rodriguez (Cadiz, Negros Occidental), the majority spokesperson.

Other House members who attended the caucus included Minority Leader Feliciano Belmonte (QC, 2nd), Benjamin Lerma (PCP-Lahar, Mt. Pinatubo), Cynthia Villar (3rd, Las Piñas), Edcel Lagman (Albay), Democritus Abaya, and party-list representatives Jaime Donaire (Bayan Muna), Eric Singson (Abono), Erato Pablo (Apec) and Rene Velarde (Buhay).

Not widely accepted

But indicating that total abolition was by no means widely accepted, three majority House members from Mindanao were decided in their reaction to Aquino's opposition campaign.

Rep. Eladio Jalo of Bukidnon's third district said that while he would support the abolition of the pork barrel, he would not sign the Aquino letter as it did not provide a system to address the needs of the countryside like classrooms, farm-to-market roads, electrification and others.

A third-term congressman who chairs the House committee on government enterprises and privatization, Jalo said he "almost all the projects" in the barangays were funded by the pork barrel.

Rep. Roberto Cajes of Bukidnon's second district said he would support the move for all congressmen, senators and the President to make their pork barrel allocations if this would help solve the fiscal problem.

Basic services

But he warned that a total moratorium on pork barrel-funded projects nationwide "runs for one year will adversely affect basic services and economic growth."

Rep. Felipe Chatto of the first district said he had no problem with the abolition of the pork barrel provided that clear mechanisms would be put in place to answer the constituencies' need for water, school buildings and feeding projects.

In separate public forums in Negros Occidental on Friday, Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Manuel Villar expressed differing views on what to do about the pork barrel.

Villar, who chairs the Senate finance committee, said cutting the pork barrel funds would not make a dent on the country's fiscal crisis.

What is needed is to put a stop to the historical bleeding of the government reward and controlled corporations (GOCCs) and improve tax collection, said Villar, who addressed a training seminar for 350 personnel of government websites in Bacolod City.

Accountable

The heads of various GOCCs with huge debts, particularly the National Power Corp. (Napocor) and the National Food Authority, should be held accountable for the financial troubles of government firms, he said.

Drilon, however, said that by giving up their pork barrel, senators and congressmen would be helping address the looming fiscal crisis.

"If everybody gave up their pork barrel, it would not only be a symbol, it would actually reduce the budget deficit," he told his audience at the 5th Masskom conference in Tolong City. Drilon earlier announced that he was giving up his pork barrel funds. With a report from Gavin P. Gomez and Dixie A. Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau

Metrobank gives ₱10M to Bayaniban Fund

TY

THE METROBANK Group, with Manila Motor Phil. Inc. and Mitsui Global, has donated P10 million to the Bayaniban Fund.

In a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo dated Sept. 10, Metrobank chair George S.K. Ty said: "This donation will hopefully send a strong signal to the private sector that will marshall into more tangible corporate contributions to the fund."

The donation also marked the entry of foreign-based corporations to the fund which is intended to help the country weather this fiscal crisis.

Ty told Metrobank would also put up donations from its 40 its officers and branches for its employees and others who may want to contribute to the fund.

President Arroyo recently expressed her appreciation for the "renewed surge of business confidence, an aggressive push for investments, diplomatic efficiencies and good governance that will all bear upon the crisis—even as we share the greater sacrifices in the months to come."

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NEWSPAPER DRIVE

Inquirer

3 suspects in Tanauan judge's slay nabbed

By Alcuin Papa

ALTO-EDITOR Sales arrested three suspects in the killing of Judge Velmore Rosales in Tanauan City in Batangas.

The suspects were identified as Aldrin Cudrin, 30; Christopher Pamonte, 30, and Michael Rivera, 19. The three, all residents of Barangay Sanjay Manzanda in Tanauan, were arrested by elements of the Batangas police and Task Force Rosales on Wednesday in Barangay Sala, Tanauan City.

Superintendent Ramon Gamo said police received a tip from a concerned citizen on the whereabouts of the suspects. Authorities immediately formed a dragnet to trap them.

Riding on a motorcycle and a Toyota Corolla, the three were spotted in Dalahican, Lucena City, forcing the presence of police operatives, they tried to escape but were arrested in Barangay Sala.

Confiscated from Cudrin were a .45-cal. pistol, an M16 rifle and ammunitions. A case of illegal possession of firearms has been filed against him in the Tanauan City Prosecutor's Office.

Murder charges had earlier been filed against Cudrin, a certain Jun Asuncion and an unidentified man for the killing of Rosales on June 18, 2004. Cudrin had been positively identified by witnesses in Rosales' shooting.

The judge was gunned down by two motorcycle-riding men on a busy Tanauan street. He was the eighth judge murdered since 1999.

Records of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force showed that Cudrin was a member of the Cuvido kidnap-for-ransom gang operating in the Southern Tagalog region.

He is facing charges in the San Pablo City prosecutor's office for the abduction and killing of Batangas Captain Leopoldo Lanting of Barangay Bauan Matanda on Sept. 2, 2002.

Cudrin was also linked to the murder of at least 16 other persons, seven of them police-men. He was also reportedly involved in carnapping, drug trafficking, assassinations, hijacking, robbery and holdups. *With Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, September 12, 2004
23rd Week in Ordinary Time
Gospel Lk 15:1-32

The tollbooth and sinners were seeking the company of Jesus, all of them eager to hear what he had to say. But the Pharisees and the scribes frowned at this, muttering, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So Jesus told them this parable:

"Who among you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, will not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and seek out the lost one till he finds it? And finding it, will he not gladly carry it home, call his friends and neighbors together and say, 'Celebrate with me for I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, just so, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine upright who do not need repenting.

"What woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one, will not light a lamp and sweep the house for a thorough search till she finds the lost coin? And finding it, she will call her friends and neighbors and say, 'Celebrate with me for I have found the silver coin I lost!' I tell you, in the same way there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner."

Jesus continued, "There was a man with two sons. The younger said to his father: 'Give me my share of the estate.' So the father distributed his property between them.

"Some days later, the younger son gathered all his belongings and started off for a distant land where he squandered his wealth in loose living. Having spent everything, he was hard pressed when a severe famine broke out in that land. So he hired himself out to a well-to-do citizen of that place and was sent to work on a pig farm. He famished was he that he longed to fill his stomach even with the food given to the pigs, but no one offered him anything.

"Finally coming to his senses, he said: 'How many of my father's hired workers have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will get up and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against God and before you; I no longer deserve to be called your son. Treat me like one of your hired servants.' With that thought in mind he set off for his father's house.

"He was still a long way off when his father caught sight of him. His father was so deeply moved with compassion that he ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. The son said: 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.'

"But the father turned to his servants: 'Quick! Bring out the finest robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and kill it. We shall celebrate and have a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and is found.' And the celebration began.

"Meanwhile, the elder son had been working in the fields. As he returned and was near the house he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what it was all about. The servant answered: 'Your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father is so happy about it that he has ordered this fine banquet and killed the fattened calf.'

"The elder son became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and pleaded with him. The indignant son said: 'Look, I have slaved for you all these years. Never have I disobeyed your orders. Yet you have never given me even a young goat to celebrate with my friends. Then, when this son of yours returns after squandering your property with loose women, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

"His father said: 'My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But this brother of yours was dead, and has come back to life. He was lost and is found. And for that we had to celebrate and be glad.'"

Commentary:

THIS story unfolds slowly and sets with drama. This is the theme of the entire chapter 15 of Luke's gospel. The chapter has three parables of God's mercy: the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost (or 'prodigal') son. In fact, Luke's could be called the gospel of the lost. Luke alone tells the story of the prodigal son. Luke also tells the story of the woman who searched the last of her coins and rejoiced there with her party, during them with her (cf 15:8-10). So does he tell the parable of the Pharisee and the tax-collector (18:9-14), he alone tells the story about Zacchaeus and the lost (or wasting) coin (19:1-10). He alone tells about the repentant thief on the cross (23:39-43)—many more in the Luke gospel."

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibanez

Asia remembers its Sept. 11 victims

BANGKOK—Three years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, victims' relatives in Asia mourned their losses anew Saturday, while officials tightened security days after a major suicide bombing in Indonesia.

In Pakistan, a radical Islamic group used the anniversary to protest American policies in Iraq. "We are holding these rallies to tell the people that America is the enemy of peace," Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, deputy leader of a coalition, said.

The family of Orsat Llangphasuk, one of two Thai women killed at the World Trade Center in New York City, was to gather at a Buddhist temple in Bangkok to pray and perform a traditional merit-making ceremony.

Orsat's eldest brother, Sathaporn, said the family still kept her bedroom furnished with the young woman's belongings and photographs, according to The Bangkok Post newspaper.

The family built a Buddhist meditation house in northern Lampang province and established a memorial Fund at a Bangkok hospital to help keep Orsat's memory alive, the newspaper reported.

Meanwhile, Bangkok police stepped up security as embassies and other international venues around the Thai capital on guard against any possible attacks on the anniversary Saturday, reports said.

In Japan, a top government spokesperson acknowledged the loss of "many precious lives, including those of 24 Japanese" in the Sept. 11 attacks, which triggered other attacks around the world.

"We are entering a period in which any terrorist attack leads to another," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda told reporters. "Each country should make efforts and also work closely globally to prevent this despicable crime of terrorism."

Australia's major political parties kept campaigning for the country's Oct. 9 federal elections later Saturday, refraining from announcing any new policies.

In the southern city of Bali, Indonesia, a mosque opened its doors for a midnight commemoration of the terror strikes, the Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported.

Australia—a strong US ally in the war on terror—paused to remember not only the Sept. 11 attacks but also Thursday's deadly bombing of the embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia, which killed nine Indonesians.

Indonesia—the world's largest Muslim nation—was plunged into the aftermath of the suicide attack, and the Sept. 11 anniversary went almost unnoticed by the media or the government, angry riots high there over the US-led war in Iraq.

In Pakistan, the anniversary sparked fears of possible security threats, and authorities deployed hundreds of army police and paramilitary soldiers to embassies, government buildings and other potential targets.

Officials said they would not allow protests or rallies to disrupt the peace.

"Our security are already alert and doing their work well, but due to third anniversary of the 9/11 events, we have asked them to be extra vigilant and alert," interior ministry spokesperson Abdur Rauf Chaudhry said. AP

ANOTHER 9/11—Picture taken on Sept. 11, 1973 in La Moneda palace in Santiago, Chile, at the beginning of the coup d'etat led by Augusto Pinochet against constitutional President Salvador Allende, who died after the attack. AFP

Parents to read victims' names at 9/11 ceremony

NEW YORK—On the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, dignitaries, community leaders and relatives of victims stood at ground zero and gazed water to the names of the dead. Last year, the children of victims took up this task.

And on Saturday once again, the names of the 2,749 people lost in the World Trade Center attack were to be read aloud—this time by parents and grandparents of those lost in the attacks three years ago.

Like both times before, the ceremony will pause four times for moments of silence, marking the exact minutes of each plane's crash and tower collapse.

Nancy Stanford-Ward, who has never attended the ground zero remembrance, will read a poem for her son, Nicky Breitbeart, a financial analyst who died just weeks before his 22nd birthday.

"Every day is hard, but this day is a little bit harder," she said. "This day is just a day to think about him."

After the first moment of silence at 8:46 a.m., names will be read in alphabetical order, pausing at 9:02, 9:59 and 10:29 a.m.

As the Pentagon, where 184 people were killed that day by another hijacked plane, officials were to lay a wreath and observe a moment of silence. In Pennsylvania, bells will toll across the state at the minute the fourth plane went down, killing the 40 passengers and crew killed aboard Flight 93.

Nationwide, communities will observe Sept. 11 in their own ways, with services at local firehouses, memorial dedications, bell-ringing events and flag ceremonies.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who was scheduled to participate in the ground zero remembrance, said parents and grandparents were asked to lead the ceremony because the city wants to "acknowledge their great sacrifice and thank them for helping all of us to shoulder the loss." AP

Jakarta mounts hunt for bombers

JAKARTA—A murderer was underway in Indonesia Saturday for Islamic militants behind a deadly bombing at the Australian Embassy as warnings were sounded for a second suicide-squad planning further attacks in the city.

Indonesian police released a video of the explosion which killed nine people claiming the bombers may have attempted a prior attack on an anniversary school during a ceremony between president and Australia's justice minister.

They said two Malaysian bombmakers of the group through to be behind both attacks had chosen exactly the site of Jakarta where they could be recruiting for further strikes.

Australia has said the attack was the work of the al-Qaeda-allied Jemaah Islamiyah terror organization. A website claiming to represent the group said the attack was a message to Canberra to pull its troops out of Iraq.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard has vowed to maintain his country's commitment in Iraq, however his election rival, labor leader Mark Latham has promised to withdraw the 850-strong contingent if he wins the Oct. 9 polls.

On Saturday he announced wide-ranging new security measures including the redeployment of Canberra's armies to Bali and new checks on flights to Australia out of Indonesia.

Police say they believe the bomb may be the handiwork of Azahari Husin, a fugitive Malaysian militant wanted with accomplice Noordin Mohammad Top in connection with the Bali bombings and arrested car, Jakarta's Marriott hotel.

Indonesian police chief Da'i Bachtiar said Saturday the Malaysians had been involved in Jakarta's outskirts and could be recruiting for another strike, causing Western embassies, hotels and banks as likely targets.

He said the group behind the bombing had intended an attack on the opening of an Australian funded Indonesian anti-terror school in July during a ceremony attended by President Megawati Sukarnoputri and Australian Justice Minister Chris Ellison, but the plot had been foiled.

Indonesian police also released a security video of the attack which showed in harrowing detail the moment of the blast and the immediate aftermath as people on the scene ran for a ball of flying glass and debris.

Jemaah Islamiyah is blamed for the Bali bombings in which 202 people died and an attack on a Jakarta hotel in August last year that killed 12. Police say the organization's top bomb-maker is a prime suspect in Thursday's blast.

In Jakarta, where Australian forensic teams are helping Indonesian police sift through bloodied wreckage, investigations were underway to determine whether up to three of the nine Indonesians killed were suicide bombers.

Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty, who flew to Jakarta with Foreign Minister Alexander Downer after the blast, also warned of further suicide attacks, saying bombers may still be at large in the Indonesian capital.

"There is intelligence suggesting that there is a second group active in the area," Keelty said. "Intelligence sources through all the four days or more and possible threats and there's further intelligence in the last 24 to 48 hours of a second group."

Australia on Saturday also announced it would ramp up an additional 2.5 million US dollars to help with the joint investigation into the bombing.

"We are determined to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Indonesians in fighting this terrorist scourge and we continue to regard what happened on Thursday as much an attack on Indonesia as it was an attack on Australia," Howard said.

At funerals were held for the Indonesian victims, outrage at the attacks was resonating in the world's largest Muslim-populated country. AFP

Bomb explodes near Saudi-American bank in Jeddah

CAIRO—An explosion rocked an area near a Jeddah branch of the Saudi-American bank on Saturday, a bank employee said, and an Arab TV station said one attacker was wounded and others are holed up in a nearby house.

An official at the bank, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that an explosion took place in the al-Rawdah district of Jeddah, where the bank has a branch.

Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV said the explosion happened outside the branch.

The official said by telephone that the explosion had "not affected" the bank's operations and gave no further details.

The blast came on the third anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States, which were carried out by 19 Arab hijackers, including 15 Saudis, and blamed on the al-Qaida terror network headed by Saudi-born Osama bin Laden.

The US Embassy spokesperson in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, Carol Kuhn, said that she was investigating the report but was unable to confirm if there had been an explosion.

Another embassy spokesperson, Robert Keith, said that although there had been "no incident" in the Jeddah consulate, the mission will be closed to the public Saturday as a "precautionary measure." He did not refer to the blast near the bank. AP

Pyongyang more resolved to pursue nuke programs after Seoul experiments

SEOUL—North Korea said last today that South Korea's recent nuclear experiments involving uranium and plutonium make the communist state more determined to pursue its own nuclear programs, a news report said.

A spokesperson for North Korea's foreign ministry condemned the South Korean experiments, conducted in 1982 and 2000, as "clearly of military nature," according to Pyongyang's official news agency KCNA, monitored by South Korea's national news agency, Yonhap.

The recent revelations of these experiments will affect the prospects for six-nation talks aimed at persuading the North to abandon its nuclear weapons programs, the unidentified North Korean spokesperson was quoted as saying.

"We strongly suspect that the United States may have misunderstood the experiments that were clearly of military nature," he was quoted as saying. "We cannot but link these developments with the issue of holding six-party talks."

South Korea said Tuesday that it extracted a tiny amount of plutonium, a key element for making nuclear bombs, in a 1982 nuclear experiment. That revelation followed an acknowledgment last week that it enriched a small amount of uranium—another element that could be used to make a bomb—in 2000.

The controversy over South Korea's experiments has threatened to further disrupt troubled efforts to persuade North Korea to dismantle its suspected nuclear weapons programs.

"Under these circumstances, it is only natural that we should never give up our nuclear program," the South Korean spokesperson said.

The North Korean threat, which follows a pattern of issuing hard-line statements in times of crucial negotiations, came as a delegation of top Chinese government and Communist Party leaders are visiting Pyongyang to discuss issues including the North's nuclear programs.

China, South Korea's key ally, has been host to three rounds of six-nation talks on ending North Korea's nuclear ambitions, but those talks ended without breakthroughs. The talks involve the United States, the two Koreas, China, Japan and Russia.

In a meeting in Tokyo, diplomats from Japan, South Korea and the United States reconfirmed Friday that the next round of six-nation talks must be held later this month as scheduled.

North Korea's reluctance to participate has stalled efforts to restart the talks, while South Korea's recent acknowledgment it had conducted nuclear experiments threatened to further complicate the negotiations.

South Korea denies any nuclear or weapons ambitions, calling those experiments purely "scientific research activities." It says it has been cooperating fully with UN nuclear inspectors to ensure transparency.

In an interview Friday with The Associated Press, US Secretary of State Colin Powell said Powell attached minimal importance to the recent disclosures that South Korea had engaged in a uranium enrichment experiment four years ago and a plutonium-based nuclear experiment two decades ago.

"It's quite clear that these were not intended other than for academic, experimental purposes, and it's over with and I think that's, frankly, the end of the matter," Powell said.

"I don't see any great significance in them, but the North Koreans always like to seize on something to make their point," said.

In its first reaction to the South Korean experiments, however, a North Korean envoy to the United Nations in New York warned Wednesday that the South Korean nuclear activities could trigger a nuclear arms race in Northeast Asia. AFP

ACCUSED US Army deserter Charles Jenkins, left, salutes as he surrenders at US Army's Camp Zama, south of Tokyo, Sept. 11 in face charges that he left his army unit in 1965 and defected to North Korea. The man in the middle is unidentified.

40 years after, US deserter surrenders

CAMP ZAMA, Japan—Nearly 40 years after allegedly deserting the US Army by crossing into North Korea, Charles Robert Jenkins turned himself in to face American military justice here on Saturday.

Jenkins, 64, was expected to bargain for a dishonorable discharge in a step toward his possible settlement in Japan with his wife, an abducted Japanese national whom he met in North Korea, and their two daughters.

Wearing a dark grey suit, Jenkins approached the military police building at Camp Zama, the headquarters of the US Army in Japan, stood to attention and gave a long salute to a senior officer.

"Sir, I'm Sergeant Jenkins, and I'm reporting," Jenkins said, according to spokesperson Major Eric Anderg.

Portrait: Marshal Lieutenant Colonel Paul Wiggins replied: "You are now under the control of the US Army."

Later, Jenkins was seen in army-supplied footage seated in a row outdoors with three gold shoulder bars signifying the rank to sergeant, receiving advance pay in US dollars.

Jenkins's appearance begins the process that will answer how Jenkins, known to his family as "Super," ended up on the wrong side of the Demilitarized Zone on a frosty night in January 1965.

Washington says Jenkins defected to facilitate North Korea while serving in South Korea near the border set up after the Korean War.

Jenkins has been charged with desertion—which carries a maximum life term—aiding the enemy, encouraging disloyalty and inciting others to desert. He has appeared in North Korean propaganda films.

His family in the United States insists he was kidnapped while on patrol and subsequently brainwashed. AFP

Hurricane 'Ivan' slams Jamaica

KINGSTON, Jamaica—Debris-choked storm waters poured through seaside streets of the Jamaican capital early Saturday as a strengthened Hurricane "Ivan" pounded the island, pushing winds of almost 260 kmph boar.

The storm, the worst to hit the region in decades, has already killed at least 27 people in Grenada, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and Tobago, and triggered panic buying and mass evacuations in parts of Cuba and Florida.

Seven meter waves slammed the coastline as Ivan approached the Caribbean island nation of 2.7 million, where a state of emergency was declared at midday Friday.

Power blinked off over the island, and cities overflowed, sweeping away homes and flooding neighborhoods with waist-high waters rolling with tree branches, boulders and debris.

"Flooding is already begun in some places," Prime Minister P.J Patterson declared around midday Friday. "I will be advising the governor general to issue a proclamation declaring a period of public emergency in the island and to summon all members to their workstations."

He pleaded with residents to evacuate coastal areas but many ignored the order saying they fear looting.

At 2 a.m., the eye of the hurricane was about 75 km southwest of Kingston, after a "wobble" west of its northwesterly path kept the eye and the strongest winds surrounding it just south of the island, the Miami-based National Hurricane Center said. AFP

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Genetics No. 1 cause of heart disease

Studies debunk notion that eating cheeseburgers is main culprit

APPARENTLY, it is not enough that former President Bill Clinton has had his chest sliced open, his breastbone sawed through, and his heart stopped cold and resplumbed. He must also suffer the finger wagging and I-told-you-so's of those who say he caused his own heart disease by indulging in cheeseburgers, cigars and fine mushrooms.

A television crew was reported on Clinton's outing [date] from a restaurant in Chappaqua, N.Y., and it was the scene of a crime. Clinton himself seems to have bought into the theory, confessing his dietary sins in interviews before doing penance on the heart-surgeon's chaise. But experts differ as to whether it is scientifically valid or fair to assume that Clinton, who has a family history of heart disease, brought on his own illness. Studies of large groups show that diet plays a role in coronary disease, but it is harder to prove that link in any individual patient.

Nevertheless some have declared the fat Clinton off the hook. Heart surgeons, who earn their living from cutting up patients like him, tend to blame his genes more than his eaten body and to doubt that his artery blockages could have been prevented. Cardiologists like nonsurgeons because, by tradition and medical orthodoxy, they are the ones who worry about the blame that the patient brings himself.

What a layman, scientifically, hears studies that have surveyed large populations over decades is that rates of heart disease are highest in people with high total cholesterol and high levels of LDL, the "bad cholesterol," and lowest among cholesterol deniers.

CLINTON

death rates from heart disease.

Based on these findings, and the fact that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, it might seem as if the problem might be solved if everyone would just give up cheeseburgers. But when it comes to determining what drives cholesterol and heart disease risk in our own person, the calculus becomes more complex. There are healthy people with high cholesterol, and heart patients with seemingly enviable readings.

In addition, a person's genetic makeup plays a powerful part in determining cholesterol levels. To complicate matters further, people respond differently to changes in income, a busy diet will make cholesterol shoot up. A lucky few can eat almost anything and still have low cholesterol. Enough exhausting rules-of-thumb for confused ordinary people to lower their cholesterol. It does not sell well enough.

In most people with heart disease, factors create a worse risk history than any one risk factor in them, said Dr. William Cole, a cardiologist at New York University. *New York Times*

Israelis kill 3 in Gaza

GAZA CITY—Three Palestinians, one a local Hamas leader, were killed Friday as Israel pressed a major offensive in the Gaza Strip and imposed a seven-night curfew on the Palestinian territories ahead of the Jewish New Year.

Meanwhile, sightseeing Jewish settlers were barred "until further notice" from Israel's planned pullout from the Gaza Strip and urged Israeli soldiers and police not to take part in what they said would be a "crime against humanity."

Jamil Hamar died Palestinian, Judaism, 34, was killed in Jerusalem by Hamas Palestinian militants and Israeli troops continued by a third day in the Jabaliya area of northern Gaza. Palestinian security sources and medics said.

Another Palestinian man was killed at the same time, while a 14-year-old boy died from wounds he had.

On Thursday, five Palestinians died and another 40 were wounded in the occupied territories.

The latest deaths brought to 4,302 the number of people killed since the beginning of the intifada, in late September 2000, including 3,256 Palestinians and 943 Israelis.

Another 50 Palestinians were injured in the same area, including three who suffered wounds when an Israeli helicopter fired a rocket, the sources said.

Israel launched a major raid on Wednesday to try to stop militants from firing makeshift rockets across the border into southern Israel.

But on Friday three more missiles made it through. They struck the Israeli town of Sderot and the Negev desert without causing any casualties, military sources said. *AFP*

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OPINION

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Private armies

LAST week's three-part special report by Abra correspondents Artho Rex Paredes and photographer BV Espiritu is a chilling look at the ultimate dirty trick in politics: assassination. The devil is quite literally in the details, but what makes the story truly terrifying is the shock of the old: The country has seen all this before.

We have already suffered through convulsions of violence by what is government jargon is now called partisan armed groups, or PAGs. In the 1960s and early 1970s, especially, the provinces of Northern Luzon and Southern Mindanao were the battleground of politicians and businessmen who killed each other or each other's relatives and supporters through their private armies.

EDITORIAL

The armies were the classic symptoms of a weak state: groups that flourished in the absence or feeble presence of the law, that rivaled the local police or military contingent, or that served as an alternative source of power.

It is too early to say that Abra, like a patient on an operating table, has slipped back into this nightmare. Altogether, there are about a hundred PAG soldiers in the province of over 200,000, possibly responsible for 14 politically motivated killings in the six years between the election years of 1998 and 2004. But local officials acknowledge that the polls last May gave the private armies a new lease on life.

There is appearance, however, is marked by the same old pieties of local politics.

The same old resonance to the practical: "As someone educated in Manila, I had a different perspective of how the political playing field should be. But when a mayor, who happened to be my close friend, was assassinated, it was then that I decided to put up my own private army," said a public official, with all the wisdom of his 29 years.

The same old lack of faith in the justice system: "Actually, all politicians have have their own private armies. Pero di sa isa ang demarcation dito (Lawmaker aren't the same here)," said another politician with a PAG.

The same old symbiotic relationship with the authorities: "They have become so emboldened because they are being protected by some high-ranking police officers," said Victoria Valeriz, who is only the governor of Abra. But a police sergeant passes the buck. "We are only issued rifles but members of PAGs here are armed with baby Armalite rifles and other high-powered guns. I am 90 percent sure that these were issued by the military."

The same old complaint about corruption and misuse of public funds: "PAG members are better armed than us because the politicians they serve use government funds to buy guns," a police official said.

And not least, the same old justification, the same old argument from deterrence: "The only way for the killings to stop is to make them feel how painful it is to lose someone that you love," said a third public official who maintains a private army.

That line was said with all the sincerity that money can buy but the politicians interviewed for the special report had one thing in common: They were all, quite literally, under the gun. The specter of violent death hounded them or their families. In turn, their private armies, or the violence that their armies inflicted, have not performed as advertised. They have not made the killings stop.

But the false sense of security they bring is a potent drug: it will become even more potent if the creeping sense of lawlessness the country has been suffering from in recent months—symbolized in the spate of unsolved attacks on journalists—picks up speed.

It is the job of Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes to close it down, and then to eliminate it altogether. He can start in Abra, scheduling that first meeting with Valeriz which the governor seems unable or unwilling to set up. His background as Armed Forces chief of staff and then defense secretary should give him the credibility to put pressure on the military; his experience as anti-kidnapping czar should give him an insight into how the police can overcome its traditional rivalry with the AFP and get the job done.

He needs to set an example that the arm of the law is not only long enough, it is also made of steel.

Leadership by example

SEPARATE OPINION

Augusto L. Cruz

LIKE an old metal warrior, President Macapagal-Arroyo gave the public servants under her trusted internal control in the executive department a sermon talking it. She declared that the country was in a period of austerity and every one must be frugal. She means breaking enough to tighten belts. That is none for her sight-seeing and personal exercise.

Accordingly, her Administrative Order 103 ordered "strict frugality" and, as summarized in this paper, calls for the "suspension of local and foreign travels, seminars, parties and sports activities, save benefits to officers and employees, purchase of overtime pay, and procurement of new vehicles."

She also decreed a 30 percent cut on "the services of consultants, technical assistants, contractual and casual employees," and stopped "the grant of honoraria in all instances, be teaching personnel, lecturers, resource persons, consultations or facilitators ... chairs and members of boards, councils or entities not paid salaries from the budget."

Although the AO is addressed only to personnel in the executive departments, it is hoped that the legislative and judicial departments, as well as the constitutional commissions, will apply similar rules as cooperation in the current efforts to stop cash flow from drying up. I mention to the columnist in convergence, but not many paid attention. Some of the other government officers that were routinely overspending public funds for their own enjoyment.

For a government so poor in cannot even build enough schools for our children, it is frustrating to see public officials overspend public funds for their own convenience and vanity. The best illustration of such profligacy is the unnecessary and wasteful spending of the wasting millions of pesos yearly. The wasted public funds are better devoted to the urgent needs of the people, like more hospitals and less medicines for the poor.

For the sins the President accuses retired AFP JGS, the papers also reported her trip to China. She took with her as part of her official delegation other spouse who, in First Gentleman acquired official character (although he lives on Timeless hope a less profile and did not accompany his wife during her diplomatic travels abroad). Five departmental secretaries went along with their respective support staffs, as well as Ms Arroyo's own aides. She probably let Mike Defensor and assistant stay.

All the members of relief Secretary Ignacio Bunye included. I suppose with support in check, as the smallest official delegation ever sent by our government, counted five undersecretaries, board and lodging, and session or sessions at the expense of either the government of the Philippines or of the host country.

But there is not all. The President directed an unofficial delegation consisting of members of her family, including their domestic help. Besides her son, Rep. Mikey Arroyo, and his wife Amy Perez, Ignacio Arroyo, who were part of the official delegation as representatives of Speaker Jose de Venecia, his other son Ilmo, her daughters-in-law Angelia and Rikki, and her grandchildren Mikaela Elena and Eva Veronica, with their respective nannies, were along. Mikey's daughter Lia stayed home and missed all the fun.

Although Bunye insisted that the Philippine government did not shoulder the expenses of the members of the unofficial delegation, he could not say how much they had spent or who must have paid for them. There would have been many offers to carry favor with the First Family. But then, of course, the President herself would have been happy to have all the bills in exchange for the busy pleasure of having her whole family, except her only daughter, enjoying all the delights of the China trip.

The only Filipino on her family excursion was in office on Aid 103 where she asked the people to undergo personal privation to mind the economic problems confronting the nation. She urged her co-workers in the executive department to be more prudent in the use of public funds and property; and avoid unneeded and excessive spending. Profligate beings shame not only to their originators and respective agencies," she insisted. "Our citizens see and they resent government."

President Arroyo reminds me of the physician who cannot heed himself. Her admonition against extravagant and imprudence in a time of scarce must apply to others but not to her whose insensitive "profligate" excursions she condones by example don't the people's concern economic. Even the most unsophisticated people who are reeling from the higher cost of food, and gasoline, and power rates, realize that we waste.

It is like telling us to swallow our pains while she and her family enjoy themselves. It is like saying we must go in and buy our woollies in mood of snowking she is privileged pleasures. It is like blame harassment's underdog advice that the poorest should eat cake if their cannot find bread.

* * *

A published notice of the Judicial and Bar Council has us among the candidates for chairman of the Legal Education Board. I am not interested in the position nor have I applied for it. I thank whoever may have nominated me, but I must declined its kindness.

Looking good

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

SOMEBODY once said that when God looks at us, He covers our sins so that he will not see the repentance in us. The difference is that when we look at ourselves and other people, we open wide our eyes and we even love magnifying glasses to see the negative.

In today's Gospel (Lk. 15, 1-10), Jesus was at the receiving end of the Pharisees' and Scribes' very judgmental and critical eyes. "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." These are people like that, people who have a knack for knocking down people because they themselves want to go up. What these people need is not a magnifying glass, but a mirror, so one their own selves whenever they criticize.

Learn from your fingers. Remember that when you point an accusing finger, you have three fingers pointing back to you. Instead of pointing a finger, why don't we hold out a helping hand? And whenever we are criticized, don't react with a closed fist. Receive criticisms with an open hand, and extend hands in prayer. There will always be people who make it their business to find fault in others even without a search warrant. The best way to put such people out of business is to simply ignore them. Well, let us quickly clear a correction to correct, disregard it—if it is useless, don't be insensitive it. If it is genuine, make use it, if it is unjustified, learn from it.

Secondary Parable of the Prodigal Son, we hear of the happy ending of the father embracing his lost son. Faithfulness is never an issue on God's part. His love is constant and unfailing. It is we who swing and go, run and hide, flee and fall, ill you find that from God, who do you think sinned? If we do not see God, who do you think sinned all the lights? If you do not feel His hands, who do you think let go?

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* * *

Commentators are God's voice of helping us go back to Him, to quiet down our clocks to listen to Him in whispers. He, behind masks, we come to our senses, we are reminded once again, and we remember that that is our identity in case. There are people who continue to be proud and surrounding and unbending in spite of the fact that "nudes are evils" from God. We don't go on fighting God. We will never win. When we are frustrated by work, failures and challenges, God is calling us not as much as he is saying life to be still, for it is in being still and humble that we feel his strength. The call is not to work for us to become a debater here or to be a repentant child.

* * *

"It takes more courage to repent than to keep on sinning." I met a boy again this week. He has always refused to go to confession, especially during the younger and during days. "Father we love (some other times)," he would always say. Now that he is older, poorer and less hopeless, do you think he'd come today to confession? Of course God! No, he still refuses to accept God's forgiveness and mend his ways. At least this time, he allowed me to bless him—something which he used to waver as or joke about in the past. It looks he would like to go front for I know that behind the confident, proud and cynical front is a scared, wounded, crying, good, little boy. He is closer to home now. In time, he will enter the door that has always been there open for him all these years. Peace, Pedro. Peace.

* * *

Sometime once and then was experience has two eyes: it stinging eye for the sins of the past, and a watchful eye for the sins of the future. Repentance means that we surrender all the sins, we have committed and the sins we can and will intend to commit.

* * *

By just looking, we can hurt people already. By just looking, we can also be indifferent, and detached and uninvolved. By just looking, we can go through life unconcerned. The Father's invitation is for all of us not to just look, but to look with the eyes of love, and to have love that always looks for opportunities to do good. Don't just go for good looks; look for good, and do good.

* * *

Incoming presidents of Filipinas o Pilipin, Ilocos, Oct. 4 to 8, to meet the Governor John Ilin, a Ilocos icon who has hosted many people and officials, sponsored by Ilocos Norte Tourism. For more details, you can call 9411304/9130308, 9022286810.

* * *

GES Class '71, the so-called Royal Class (Parish of Jesuits, Fap, Stalwart Hilkers and Bishop Hussar) is inviting all the 33's and Different Class Reunion in Georgian City on Oct. 17-18. For particulars, please call 8097, 8984301/8911892.

* * *

Bold recently in Cagayan de Oro was the National Congress on the Role Childhood in care of the various ministries officers of the Catholic Church. All of us have a mission in this life. Yes, we all are co-ministers of our lord.

* * *

A testament with the Lord

Lord, help me to go beyond my comfort zone to share good habits to so really look good in You. Amen.

Heading home

RIVELLE

Raimundo J. Fernández

It's the last few days of our vacation in Illinois, the so-called Lincoln Country of Midcontinent Park in Chicago which, in the words of Illinois Richard Daley, serves as "an enduring tribute to Chicago's long history of architectural and artistic excellence." The contemporary office park is a decent sculpture in residence cited by André Aquino: As I mentioned in an earlier column, Chicago is also the site of a double-tiered steel monument of our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, at Lincoln Park Drive. The lobby of the museum of Abraham and Mary Harriet houses the world's first 3-tactile stars of Barnum and Everglider; and so the John Shedd Aquarium, the largest in the world, the beauty of the coral reefs most specialized. Negros Occidental is appropriated to an ongoing P600 Thousand-dollar.

More than any other major city in the world, Chicago has been extremely generous in its appreciation of Philippine history and culture. Independently, a new Philippine consul general, Ambassador Rhodda Cifuentes, recently assumed office in Chicago.

Back in knowledge, I decided to host a history buffet on the Fourth of July weekend. I didn't get their last names but an old-style barbershop meeting mainly in street mirrors. Unlike the "Ipersian" size gear in the regular barbershops, they will employ a lot of senior visits. I asked Dave Wilson, a retired engineer from Evanston, Illinois, and he replied that he was a registered Republican, but he didn't intend too sure about voting for President Bush. Like many Americans, the issue of the economy was very much on his mind. But he was also concerned about extending the Republican health-care system to everyone. The Republican National Convention, held for the first time in Kennedy Democratic New York City, but just ended, giving President Bush a slight lead over his opponent John Kerry in the polls. I'm going to keep tabs before the voting, the race is still considered too close to call.

An interesting story on the front page of the Chicago Tribune is about the life of an Illinois immigrant. It is a story that could serve by writers in a Philippine daily, considering the secrecy which do such our boss writers.

In 1999, Shiho Wakamoto won $40 million in the Illinois lottery. At that time it was considered the largest prize ever won by an individual in North America. She, a bachelor, had just left a printing company. He had asked his father to buy a few lottery tickets and, with his brother and sister, had agreed to divide the money if they ever won.

Pure enough, upon winning, the proceeds were divided equally among them. After his father died and sister decided to be cast of Mike, he decided to take his share in 10 annual installments. He informed his brother, who was 28, bought a variety of investments and started a restaurant business. Both ventures ended in failure, and he has since stopped away from sales forms of risk-taking. Today he lives off carefully placed investments.

As a young man, Mike was a high school world, who had lead of his good fortune, and lottery talk him in that's his winnings with them. One specific require was for $10,000 to start a business. It lasty never knew 20 paper promises or letters saying she was down to her last $100, and needed help to a tire, a drunk who recognized him asked him to buy a round of drinks for the house, he did.

According to Mike, the low thing about winning the lottery is "how every morning I can send off my kids to school and be on hand when they come back. A lot of dads miss that kind of stuff."

What are the chances of winning such a lottery? A statistics professor says it's like "randomly grabbing a specific quarter (25-cent coin) from a truck 30 miles high."

• • •

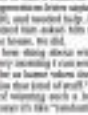
San Angeles was our last stop on the way home. Our nephews, Bij Valenzuela, a cousin of Gary V., met us at the airport, and our agents the night at his family home in Indio home with wife Elma and their two kids, Bryl and Marvel. The next day, All drove us to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley. Among the gifts on display at the museum were a presidential commemorative coin, a Colt revolver, a model of gun I watched — both gifts from Imelda Marcos to Nancy Reagan.

Ronald Wilson Reagan, the 40th president of the United States, was a hugely popular figure in California. I recall seeing him the time we were heading to his interment in Simi Valley. People had lined up along the route of the motorcade, hoping to catch a glimpse of his casket as it moved by. I went to the final meeting place, Rancho Del Cielo, but could only see the library site as the roads "I know in my heart that man is good. That what is right will always eventually triumph. And there is no power on earth to control any evil."

Presidential libraries are unique to the United States are privately funded institutions showcasing the lives and times of their namesakes. During the high times it like undertaking a course in Political History, complete with manuscripts, documents and relics of key eras. I'm glad we have been fortunate enough to visit the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda and now the Ronald Reagan Museum. In November, the Clinton Library in Little Rock, Arkansas, will be inaugurated—the latest in a line of presidential archives which will enable people to better understand and appreciate historical events of the past years.

In the Philippines, there are no comparable facilities. Perhaps, it is time for us to look into the possibility of providing posterity with a more accessible record of the presidency.

Sacrilege



AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

MEMOIRS actor "Sacrilege," the New Anne Goopaste's latest production this week with the subject of women to be priesthood, my husband and I got to thinking about the beginning of daughters.

More specifically about the teenage parents convey about the house girls are and we see for themselves. We tell them: "You can be whatever you want to be, but at minute than could wish that because they aren't a large enough.

That led us to thinking of the various careers and occupations that have opened up for women recently, from soldiers to firefighters, issues to "servicemen," even to the priesthood or ministry.

And that, we decided, was the fundamental unfairness of the Catholic Church but on women in the priesthood. How can we convince our daughters—and our nephews—that they are as capable as men of serving God and His people in crisis and decision in life as their brothers when, right off, the Church we belong to said, indeed, how has barred this vast important life choice on the grounds that we are not "worthy" enough?

Emotional for women, I confess, it was easier, among the many issues I have to cope with the hierarchy, although I often point it to the heart of my mind. Not because I find it a more important, but because it is more personal. I don't have to, I believe, accept to be barred from the Church because the as a member with full and equal rights when, apparently, it doesn't think I am fit enough for its highest offices.

It is easy for me to shrug these niggling doubts to the corners of my consciousness. I have to hear "the call." To realize, as our religion classes taught us, I learned a different one, the value of humility and service. I don't have to be ordained or called to be priesthood? Are they in ignore this invitation to a vocation, or do they just subscribe it and convince themselves that religious life, which is a worthy and equal-calling but a different one, it is the ordination that is promised?

When will women become full first-class citizens of the Roman Catholic Church? Not many future Clarets are out there right now swallowing their pride, yet finding the latter of the unfulfilled

Another bank failure, another Senate probe

ICAD 10,000 depositors of First Savings Bank, most of whom are mother vendors and small-scale entrepreneurs, are presently on edge while waiting for the return of their money.

If your money that came from illegal or immoral sources, it's money they honestly worked for and religiously set aside to meet their business requirements, pay for the education of their children, or save for possible emergencies like the one.

Compared to the woes of the rest of the country's banking institutions, First Savings' financial problems are peanuts. Its deposits represent only 0.2 percent of the banking industry's. But it's telling that only 30 percent of the banking industry's. But it's telling that only 30 percent of the banking industry's deposits would last seven days a week, or be able to start withstanding runs that they can deposit in their accounts, and the least that you will get in response is a blank look.

Until the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. makes good its promise to pay bank accounts that do not exceed P250,000, the depositors can only gnash their teeth in anger over the betrayal of the trust they gave to the ill-fated bank. If runs weeks can fall, the bank owners, the Tejeros family allowed members of a commercial bank that collapsed due to mismanagement in 1979(!), would have been dropped in worse than prison already.

Incidentally, none of First Savings' owners have been seen or heard from since the bank's collapse. It's been the Batiquis brand, by Filipinos and PDIC officials who have been answering the questions from the public and answering as the representatives of the depositors. Either of two things: the owners were able to sneak out of the country before the bank ran out of funds, or they are comfortably holed up somewhere abroad, waiting for the heat over the Runs to die down before they resume their daily routine.

Immunity

As expected, the politicians were quick to take advantage of the publicity generated by the bank failure. Two Senate committees are poised to embark on investigations "in aid of legislation" to determine the circumstances that led to the bank's collapse and the actions the Bangko Sentral could have taken to head off the problem.

In what else to new? Whenever a bank goes bankrupt, a legislative inquiry follows as a matter of course, like a knee-jerk reaction. In 1997, Monte de Piedad, the country's second oldest bank that was for nearly century by the Roman Catholic Church, went belly up unless it received from the P1.4 billion bank for transport operators debacle.

The following year, Orient Bank, owned by real estate developer Jose Ejercito Estrada, was closed down for failure to meet the required capital adequacy ratio.

In 2000, the once proud and mighty Urban Bank collapsed under the weight of close to P1 billion worth of real estate loans that were secured by fraudulent collaterals.

Two years later, Overseas Bank, controlled by billionaire industrialist Alfonso Yuchengco, was placed under receivership. Overseas, run from Quezon City without ever by the PDIC when it was hit by a bank run caused by a change in ownership and interest management disputes.

The congressional investigations into these bank failures were from page to prime-time radio and TV news. Several congressmen and media practitioners express case crimes investigators in from of media reporters.

Recommendations

After the full measure of publicity had been exhausted, nothing was heard from the lawmakers again. Several months later, and while the people's attention was focused elsewhere, their committee reports submitted their reports. Like all other inquiries of a similar nature, their recommendations boiled down to two: prosecute erring bank officials and tighten the screws on the banks.

There is nothing in the air to indicate that the planned Senate investigations into the bankruptcy collapse may turn out differently. Except for the name of the bank, the circumstances that led to its downfall, the banking rules and regulations applicable and the regulatory agencies involved are similar to those of its two-bank and company.

If the purpose of the investigations is not to determine if any stockholders or officers of First Savings, or officials of the Bangko Sentral should be held responsible for this latest banking fiasco, then they task can be more efficiently or professionally undertaken by the Office of the Ombudsman or Department of Justice.

Considering the number of cases involving a violation of banking laws that have been thrown into their laps by congressional committees since past few years, the SEC and Ombudsman already have the expertise to find out the identities of the parties responsible for the emergence of First Savings.

The banking industry is tightly regulated. The Bangko Sentral and the banks' own organization have well-defined rules and limits for all kinds of banking transactions. Because money is involved, the paper trail in banks (although money does through computers) is meticulous. Every centavo either to be accounted for by the daily banks.

Investigation

To the trained eyes of a determined investigator, the "smoking gun" can be spotted even if it is buried under a mountain of receipts, invoices and other bank documents. Which makes the Senate's job of finding out the truth a game of publicity but in the quiet confines of a secluded room.

If the objective of the Senate inquiry is to enact new legislation to prevent a repeat of the First Savings incident, the ill-fate may be an exercise in futility. Republic Act 7653 defines in clear and forceful terms the duties and responsibilities of the governor of the Bangko Sentral in regard to the regulation of banks and savings institutions in our economy.

The law gives the Bangko Sentral the authority to take the appropriate preventive measures to protect bank depositors if it has information that a bank is having financial problems. At the first sign of trouble, no matter how little, given without waiting for the bank concerned to request assistance, the Bangko Sentral can step into the picture and take measures into to save banks to prevent the depositors.

Whether or not the Bangko Sentral was remiss in the First Savings case is a simple case of investigation and application of the law. Congress does not need a Senate inquiry, with all due attendant expenses, to be able to do that.

But if the purpose of the investigation is to fill in the time before they go on recess and fill the rest of the country's stupefier expense, or to give the impression to the public that they are doing something to earn their pay, that's a different matter.

Crisis psychology

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's dilemma over whether to acknowledge the full magnitude of the country's fiscal and debt crisis, or to minimize the gravity of the situation, is a case in point. It is by reducing the problem to a simple budget deficit.

Confronted by a paper from treasurers of the Philippine economists, which showed that the country faces a serious fiscal and debt crisis in the near future, the President responded that we were already in the midst of the crisis. This admission puzzled even the hitherto most economic managers.

But it allowed her to do several things. Despite the debt of frightening dimensions and swallows, she could continue to insist that she has the right to demand that Congress now focus on the urgent task of adopting the administration budget-power rather than on debating the causes of the crisis. She knows that she, the one in the crisis the opportunity to consolidate her hold on the presidency by decimating lingering doubts about her electoral mandate as critical discussion in a time that commands national unity.

While a family is hit by a crisis, its members feel morally obliged to set aside their bickerings and unite in the face of danger. The parents, in particular, feel compelled to shield the rest of the family, take orders from one quarter, and agree to put the interests of the whole family ahead of their own. Mrs. Arroyo assumed the status of carrying family responsibility when she declared in her State of the Nation Address (SONA) recently. She issued a stern warning: "If these urgent measures before they can be undertaken or adequate our efforts, then [we] could waste time. Our people are betrayed me. I have their mandate, and I am here to serve that mandate for our country's best interests."

The reference to "families" is interesting. I am sure she means to say that, with the elections behind her, she now sees herself to be enough "non-political president." But ironically, the word "mandate" also necessarily reminds us of the dark

Comments to: davidinquirer@yahoo.com

COMMENTARY

Raul L. Bolaños

Senate Grace is an excellent acting vehicle, which hasn't deserved, one of New Wave Europe. Her's regulars, grabs with wheelchair-bound parts. What's the chemistry between Grace and Kingsley, who plays Batson, and Lee Hiuk, who casual the role of Cardinal Ching, one to assimilated as have small a woman she is. Because alone, she fills up the stage and constantly out attention.

• • •

Child singing division by director Ilsa Aula brings home the point about the disaster the Church leads with the gap between itself and its members.

Sister Mary Lou (Grace) is a nun who is ordered by Cardinal Ching and two other bishops, to face charges regarding her behavior and her views. If found "guilty" of violating Church laws, she would be expelled from her order.

While we have not yet had the face the audience reaction, Sister Elena confirms the effusion from her seat among the audience, being the more in tears. It is as if Sister Grace speaks one part among her fans, as if the viewers and Lee Hiuk are the values, in this modern age, the Church...or rather its leaders—a behold, much like an exterior, with fondness and amusement to her sins is treasured and impressive.

We just wish that Grace went to say, but now's just not getting through to us. So, we have our memo and listen to silence to our fancying and nodding. But, sometimes, we wish you'd stop and listen to the words of Sister Mary Lou. Maybe, the literature while Lee would's looking, we gave up and developed minds of our own. We want to remain part of the family, but it all we hear are the same classroom clashes, then we'll have no choice but to take our distance and just say you an hour to occasions.

Sister Grace has the last word, though. Welcome at around the world for taking, the nun is summoned to the Vatican, where she's informed to relinquish her habit or leave to be disallowed by nuns and laity in parishes she loved priests. We in our cardinal, the Church needs to activate answers. The day the women in the priesthood is just around the corner.

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TALK of the TOWN

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Editor Juan F. Santamaria Jr.

UP 1 plan: Can it keep RP afloat? (3)

THE PAPER refutes: by 11 professors at the University of the Philippines School of Economics (UPSE), which urges the government to adopt a set of revenue and cost-saving measures to head off economic collapse, has triggered debates inside and outside the academe.

Last week, we featured an article claiming that the UP economists were selective in their identification of the causes of the fiscal crisis and that the solution they were proposing was woefully inadequate.

Today, we are running two articles on issues that the UP economists did not discuss in their paper—the pattern of rent-seeking, influence peddling, cronyism and corruption in the National Power Corp. whose rate increase the economists are supporting, and the ethics of debt relief.

Next week, we will print an article by six graduate students, who came to the defense of their mentors at the UPSE after Walden Bello, Lidy Nacpil and Ana Maria Nemenzo wrote then the UPSE report was overdue, selective and not daring enough.

The paper that the PhD students submitted to Talk of the Town is titled "Comments on the Bello et al. critique: Biased and econometrically unsound."

It pays to bleed Napocor

By Hector Dinio-Pecaoul
Dinio, Institute for Rapoist Democracy

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez justifies the recent rate hike given to the Energy Regulatory Commission to the National Power Corp. (Napocor) as reflecting the "true cost" of the power we use locally.

What he and the professors at the UP School of Economics, who are supporting the rate increase, don't tell the public is that a significant part of the "true cost" of the Napocor includes a never-ending pattern of rent-seeking, influence peddling, cronyism and corruption by a privileged few. This is Napocor's tale.

From 1981 to 1986, Napocor accumulated the nearly half (46 percent) of the deficits of government-owned-and-controlled corporations. At the end of 2002, slightly to over a fifth of the country's external and long-term external debt was owed by Napocor.

The company's accrued debt from 1999 is impressive. Since this base ballooned from P6 billion to P12 billion in 2000, to P34 billion in 2002. Napocor's assets further ballooned to P70 billion in 2003, and are expected to top P115 billion this year, according to the Department of Budget and Management (See table).

By end-2003, according to the Freedom from Debt Coalition, Napocor's liabilities stood at P1.4 trillion, and were responsible for 30 to over 40 percent of the national government's debt of P3.3 trillion as of the same date.

Bad and morbid plant

Remember the infamous Bataan Nuclear Power Plant?

The Marcos cronies who promoted that deal has gained notice, himself and his two sidekick safety researchers in Europe. The observed engineering and basic set-back from safer, built in politics, and some even serve recharging/leave with President Macapagal-Arroyo's ear.

Meanwhile, the 101 nuclear-powered built the plant (which has yet to produce a single watt of electricity), has been paid some cost, and the 620 units whose loans made the fraud possible have managed their debt, unscathed.

Not at least one non-performer with this debt of distinction. To this very day we are still paying for it.

If the Marcos era was dominated by an overpriced power plant imposed by an American multinational and bolstered by a crony with IM bank finance, the Ramos era saw a mushrooming of deals that involved more multilateralism and billion more of dollars (1, See Table). Ramos' power grants such as Power, Mirant, Cenpeco and California Energy took the place of Westinghouse. Instead of a loan, Napocor ended up with overpriced Power Purchase Agreements with these independent power producers (IPPs). As term loans rate, income and profits were guaranteed whether or not they produced electricity.

Former President Fidel Ramos stated in, when he promised (as a single senator would be shelled out by the PIP contracts with the IPPs. He knew—we did not—that the economic assumed figures that guaranteed the profits of these IPPs (in time—we do too—that the central business risks of a poor development and of a fast price hike were to be absorbed by Napocor. He also knew—we established that too—that the common price for a good number of these IPPs was higher than Napocor's own rate for a comparable generating asset.

Rent-seeking

The contracts with IPPs have created a new business that walks like the debt, talks like the debt, and moves like the debt—commercial liabilities of Napocor with more 1.6 times Napocor's current net of end-2002.

But the bleeding continues and worse is yet to come.

In May 2002, in response to the public outcry over the rapidly increasing power inflationary in our electric bills, the President imposed a cap on what Napocor could recover from us for the contracts it had entered into with the IPPs. In short, the cushion Napocor's PPA charges from P1.20 per kilowatt hour to 60 centavos per kilowatt hour (0.60 peso).

Thus, the reduced Napocor's revenues by 60 centavos per unit. Assuming Napocor sells 1 trillion kilowatt's revenues fall by 60 centavos per kWh, one ought to find a way to reduce costs by at least as much, or even a dimension greater, but. The opportunity to do the with the renegotiation of Napocor's contracts with the IPPs, following the review of these contracts by antitrust Agency Commission headed by then Finance Secretary (the failure) attached.

Renegotiated contracts

Unfortunately, all the threats of renegotiation succeeded in resurgent, acting was 6 centavos per kWh. Today, more. The savings of 6 centavos per kWh can be considered genuine value, as the marginal improvement on Napocor's costs would not cost to unilaterally left. And if an independent assessment were made of such costs, the renegotiated amount is, I do doubt the savings chart of 6 centavos per kWh could be legitimately guaranteed.

But we must remember one thing. The 60-centavo figure is not small. Unless the price depreciates against the dollar, when the cost of imported coal, fuel oil, etc., goes up, when Napocor's costs rising hits or exceeds 60 centavos per kilo, then the 60-centavo figure correspondingly expands. This is another reason why the administration should have negotiated a one reduction of more than 60 centavos per kWh when it ran in the table with the IPPs in renegotiation the PPAs.

So a cap on the PIP, recovery of Napocor, plus bungled and ineffective renegotiations with IPPs—as which officials and President Arroyo has herself to blame—are resulting in lower revenues for Napocor and rising costs (See table).

It dried, even more damning, documents of the President will forfeit and Napocor's losses to new depths this year. In 2003, in exchange for a P30 billion "settlement" that will be extracted from us government again, the administration allowed Meralco Electric Co. (Meralco) to energy on its contract to buy electricity from Napocor.

Think of it this way: Napocor's main marketer are distribution utilities, and the biggest utility with the biggest market is Meralco. Meralco's franchise is equivalent to about 70 percent of the national market for electricity. With the go signal from the President, Napocor has no biggest client, on which it was relying for the significant chunk of its earnings [2].

Meralco had a contract to purchase electricity from Napocor. But since the time of Martial Law, Napocor's PPA charges from P1.20 per kilowatt hour to 60 centavos per kWh.

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Meralco had a contract to purchase electricity from Napocor. But since the time of Martial Law, Napocor's PPA charges from P1.20 per kilowatt hour to 60 centavos per kWh, which is why Meralco entered out of its contract with Napocor.

Secretary Jesse Robredo explains: "The position of PSALM [Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.] is clear. It is a contract that is valid and that Meralco should respect their contracts. The contract provides that Meralco can reduce its offtake from Napocor to zero contestable demand, which is about 30 percent. It has provided that it does not reduce its offtake from Napocor and give it to us 10%." (Business World, Dec. 2, 2002).

So, this appears to be precisely the outcome of the deal with President Arroyo.

This is why Napocor's rates have been increased.

A price increase to cover declination that the problems to unbind. But are all issues, starting with the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, that it is unjust to solve a problem by socializing the burden of private investment, decisions, transactions and technocrats, the keepers of the neoliberal faiths, would like us to believe—that having vested powers and protected Napocor, the bleeding is stopped. It is about time a PhD to know that this isn't true.

Nor will the privatization of Napocor end the culture of rent-seeking and influence peddling and of passing the buck to the government in our expense. It will just make available Napocor's assets as bargain incentives prizes to closet rent actors who have profited from the ordinary—great no participation Napocor may disappear from the government scene, but to cutters will thrive and will re-emerge in another entity in no time at all. That is because those responsible for its bleeding have been rewarded over and over again, while we are told to lower ourselves and bear the burden of painful power rate hikes in the interest of justice.

We didn't learn our lesson from the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant 20 years ago. We should not make the same mistake.

Notes:

1. As of end-2001 Napocor's loans obligations to the IPPs stood at approximately $11 billion. Compare this with the $1.2 billion Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

2. Although the government refuses to fully disclose the terms of the renegotiations, I have seen one such compensation.

3. At the end of 2003 Meralco owes Napocor P14.1 billion, including penalties, for power that it had consumed so but from Napocor but refuse to refused to pay for Napocor is has provided it. At present although we had difficulties this penalty in its accounts.

(Mister Dinio-Pecaoul has a master of science from the London School of Economics).

Napocor Finances (in thousand pesos)

Item	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Gross Revenues	47,750,137	48,710,017	53,160,525	140,146,328	133,917,917	86,510,000	87,000,000
Operating	28,417,178	29,400,000	100,139,912	113,609,164	110,925,000	113,000,000	114,000,000
Non-Operating	19,000,000	18,400,000	46,453,867	26,000,000	23,000,000	26,000,000	26,000,000
Expenditures	50,167,000	60,000,000	69,500,000	140,000,000	146,000,000	170,000,000	180,000,000
Net Income/(Loss)	(2,417,000)	(11,900,000)	(12,900,000)	(99,000,000)	(123,000,000)	(70,000,000)	(93,000,000)
Corporate Borrowings outstanding	not available	57,000,000	67,000,000	80,000,000	72,000,000	80,000,000	

Source for Corporation on Debt's audited annual reports of Napocor, Department of Budget and Management.
Interest Corporate borrowings/obligations from Budget of Expenditures and Sources of Financing, Chapter 9.

Right to subsistence and development has priority over debt payment

By Fr. Maynilo L. Cariaganan
Bishop, Territorial Abbey
de Bon Carlos, Cebu City

As a nation who are conscious of their duty to provide the moral compass much needed in this difficult times, we as pastors of God's present time the call for every Filipino to share in the sacrifices needed to avoid economic collapse would come from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines. By now the challenge has reverberated the moral conscience of not a few individuals and has sparked many groups into contributing to the already depleted economic coffer.

But the call is clear, and that remembering shortsighted. It may evoke a defensiveness responding of realistic and generously, but it is our moral to fulfill the imperative of moral justice, it may call some-

thing to the national point, but it does not fundamentally confront the roots of the fiscal crisis.

That our bishops' voice was this always timid and shortsighted. In a statement on the foreign debt problem made public in 1986, they confined by diagnosed the debt issue as a matter more of the country's increasing poverty and that helped the government to create a debt-service policy based on moral grounds. The debt crisis is, according to them, a "predicament outside of a fast-growth economy" that would not be met based on simply such a moral basis policy but must be considered within the framework of an "ethics of survival."

Ethics of survival

In an ethics of survival, one is morally bound to confront our debt repayment policy based on Pius XI's encyclical Quadragesimo Anno (1931) and reiterated by Pope John Paul II in 1987 encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, that the fundamental right to subsistence and development has priority over the obligation to pay these debts.

In an ethics of survival, there is a moral presumption based on preservation rights and basic should be paid to explosion of so that whatever paid back only partially or with wrongful delay leaves justice. But in an ethics of survival, the obligation to repay it it requires sacrifice from a people incompatible with human dignity and the preservation of life.

Aside from fulfilling the requirements of moral justice, the imperative of accountability must be equally served for things are done haughty complete values debts, to make foreign creditors such as banks and patron banks.

History

When a government borrows money from creditor banks, the creditors are also morally bonded of the purpose are informed of its terms and conditions. Except for a few who may assist in bond's built the transaction, the citizens, particularly the poor, are not informed, but once the terms of repayment are determined, the citizens are required to bear the burden.

Those who are paying it with poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, diseases and death, do not owe it and least are beneficiaries by it," as the Catholic Bishops of the United States had reminded the creditor banks, many of which are based in their country. "Why should the poor in debtor countries, who had nothing to say about accruing the debt and have little or no benefit from it, have to bear the greatest burden of its repayment?"

In an ethics of survival, servicing debts that have been granted or assumed into cases or used to finance projects overpriced corrupt, fraudulent or simply for luxurious. There is indeed a moral obligation to hold those who have betrayed public trust accountable to the people.

Short memory

It is therefore a disappointment when leaders of the dominant religion of this country did not dig deep into the ethical resources available to them and did not highlight the current fiscal crisis. It was only a little more than a decade ago when their book of bold and economic-moral, but like many of us, it seems, they have a short memory.

While the current fiscal crisis may be a matter for government and administration, it is certainly not the time for the government to squeeze more money from the pockets of the poor. It is indeed a time to mobilize that patriotic zeal for nationalism, among them the "minimum appropriation" of the billionaires and helping alleviate the debt, have also worked for the common good.

Our crisis is another historic chance to be either the "model debtor" that we are known to be or, as Walden Bello et al. ("The G7 School of Economics report: Overdue, selective, our daring enough," Sept. 5, 2004) would put it, to be "much tougher with our creditors than we have been so far." Ours is therefore another opportunity to reinstate pouring the bones, but this policy of our poor or to include foreign creditors the burden that fits.

Across the NATION

Defensor: Mining way out of crisis

DEFENSOR: speaking at the forum on mining at the SAP in Tagaytay as forum leaders including his predecessor Elisea Gozun and mining executive Benjamin Philip Romualdez look on.

TAGAYTAY CITY—Environment Secretary Michael Defensor on Friday urged key players in the mining industry and representatives of the country's indigenous peoples to conduct continuous dialogues for the speedy revitalization of the industry and to help free the country from its current financial crisis.

"From the expected initial investment of $1 billion and potential yearly income of around $2.5 billion from the mining industry, it is much, much higher than the $300 billion rice package of President Macapagal-Arroyo," Defensor told the participants during the closing of the two-day forum on mining and the mined industry at the Development Academy of the Philippines here.

Former environment secretary Elisea Gozun also attended the closing ceremony.

To illustrate his point, Defensor said the projected revenues from the revitalized mining industry could even handle the potential government windfalls should it pursue its plan to impose income-tax rebates to those managing systems of fuel pricing.

"A 32 dollar higher than the projected tax base will manage, which may even invite another Ed sa," the environment secretary said.

Defensor warned that the country's mining industry is now being left behind in the global competition and if the situation will continue, the enormous potentials from the country's rich mineral resources will itself decline.

"We all have to work together and make it faster," he stressed. Up to the early 1980s, the Philippines was a leader in the mining sector of the world, listed as one of the top five mineral producers in the world.

Twenty-five percent of the country's foreign exchange was derived from the mining industry.

Chamber report

But based on the report of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (CMP), the mining industry at present is at the bottom of the heap and can hardly contribute two percent to the country's foreign exchange earnings.

On Jan. 30, President Macapagal-Arroyo issued Executive Order No. 270 outlining the National Policy Agenda on Revitalizing Mining in the Philippines, in line with her declared policy direction to encourage the development of mining in recognition of the economic contribution from the sector.

Benjamin Philip Romualdez, CMP president, declared the commitment of the mining sector to support and protect the interest of the tribal peoples.

In a symbolic display of his own commitment to the indigenous peoples, Romualdez distributed a copy of his book titled, "The Mangyans of Mindoro," to DENR and National Commission on Indigenous Peoples officials.

Romualdez, also the president and chief executive officer of mining giant Benguet Corp., said he trusts the photo and true book when he says only 17 percent of "us go to know the culture of the Mangyans."

He urged the forum participants to hold continuous meetings, especially between the leaders of the country's tribal peoples and the mining sector so he promised to maximize these relationships with the indigenous peoples.

Defensor described the fact-finding forum as a "fixed breakthrough" between the officials of the CMP, DENR (DENR) and the Philippine Wood Producers Association.

"There's a lot of understanding and sharing. It helps erase the suspicion/ hatred/ etc. of an inherent conflict between the indigenous peoples and the mining and wood industries. They have to know each other more," he said.

Tribal view

For his part, NCIP chair Reuben Dumay Lungaing said the meeting was an important step toward building a better understanding among all stakeholders.

He also urged the DENR and the NCIP to harmonize the process involved in the issuance of the "free and prior informed consent."

FPIC is the foremost requirement before any project may be introduced in any area covered by environment domain as provided for in Section 59 of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act.

It is issued by the concerned tribal community through its authorized representative upon signing of a memorandum of agreement.

Based on the report of Mines and Geosciences Bureau chief Horacio Ramos, there is an increase of activities in mining exploration this year.

The MGB reported that during the first half of the year, at least 13 mining firms had already been exploring 67,500 hectares in 125 different parts of the country for prospects of gold, copper, nickel, silver and other minerals.

Mining industry officials said the country should have earned at least P20 billion in export revenues since 1995, if only the government had fully implemented RA 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, which allows foreign firms to own up to 100 percent of mining projects in the country.

But environmentalist groups have filed a petition before the Supreme Court questioning the constitutionality of RA 7942 on claims that the law would displace indigenous communities and destroy the country's natural resources.

In its decision issued exactly 11 days after the issuance of Macapagal-Arroyo's EO 270, the Supreme Court had nullified all provisions of RA 7942 concerning financial or technical assistance agreements and other permits that can be granted to foreign interests. Bobbie Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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— are between 17-25 years of age,
— have satisfactory school records,
— have not completed any college degree, and
— gross personal annual income not exceeding Php 864,000.00 if working

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1. Birth certificate
2. Recent income tax return with W2 or certificate of employment and compensation from employer or certification as source and amount of income from barangay officials.

Application period for School Year 2005 – 2006
September 13, 2004 – December 3, 2004
Testing Date: January 8, 2005

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Drug-crazed suspects kill 4 in Davao City

DAVAO CITY—At least four members of a family in Barangay Matina in Talomo District here died, while three others, including a Japanese in-law, were seriously injured when two shooting incidents involved them with a knife and machete pipe-early morning Saturday.

Chief Insp. Vicente Danao, chief of the Talomo police station, identified the slain victims as Bienlinda Lacorte, 50, an Army reservist, his wife Soledad, 47; his son-in-law Julius Belvestra, 21; and grandson Kenneth, nine-year-old.

Those being treated for varying degrees of injuries were Glendaluz's daughter Grace Belvestra and her Japanese husband Tatsuhiro, and Julius' three-year-old daughter Carmela.

Danao said the suspect, identified only as Jim Jim and Junjung Bakang, were apparently high on drugs.

He said the suspects bludgeoned and stabbed the victims, who were then sleeping inside their house in Lanzona Subdivision.

Danao said based on the account of a household, the suspects, both residents of Governor Generoso street in Davao Oriental, arrived in the Belvestra's house around midnight Friday.

As soon as they, the Belvestra's welcomed them despite coming over in an unholy hour.

Angelina Cabrera, 37, cousin of Jim Jim was awakened by a commotion but decided to stay in her room because of fear.

When the commotion was over, Cabrera went out of her room and found her mother bathed in their blood.

Neighbors later came in and helped bring the wounded victims to the hospital.

Danao said the motive of the killing could be robbery and personal grudge.

Aside from fleeing with the victims' cellphones, the suspects at no took away Glendaluz's .45 cal and 9 mm pistols. Anthony Alcaide, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Typhoons bring ₱250M damage to roads, infra

SAGADA CITY—Typhoons in the past two years have damaged roads and infrastructure projects in Cordillera amounting to ₱250 million, a French engineering consultant said.

Claude Allouche said the recent typhoons alone damaged roads worth ₱80 million.

He said trucks loaded with rock salt to further damage the stretch of the Halsema Highway from La Trinidad to Bogia town in Benguet. Halsema Highway connects interior Cordillera to Ilocos.

Landslides

He also said rains caused major landslides in five key cities during the past two weeks. Rehabilitation will have to be delayed until the weather clears, he said.

But even then, the rehabilitation of the Halsema Highway will be 60 percent complete, Allouche said.

"If we go into details, 16 kilometers of previously unpaved roads were paved and 6.5 kilometers remain unpaved," he said.

He also said the concreting of walls to stop landslides is already 60 percent finished. Sixty percent of the drainage line also been completed but only a fourth of the line or side drains has been finished.

The rehabilitation of the Halsema Highway is limited to the 45-km stretch from La Trinidad to the Benguet side of Mt. Data. Frank Cimatu, PIA Mountain Province Bureau

KARLOS MANLUPIG/PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

DEEP LOLF
The boat of the Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City draws not only Catholic devotees but also vendors of assorted products, like this woman selling locally made fans.

Dumaguete becoming RP dog capital

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Dumaguete is fast developing a reputation as the dog capital of the Philippines.

Jose Rizal, on a stopover during his exile to Dapitan City, gave it the name "the City of Good People."

It is also known as a University Town, due to the presence of four universities.

It is also regarded as the unofficial pet capital of the Philippines, because of the continuous big performance of motorcycle dealers here for the past several years.

Lately, however, another moniker has cropped up—the "City of Dogs."

There are just too many stray dogs in this city. For Dumaguete's population of 100,000, there should only be 5,000 dogs, according to a World Health Organization guideline.

But the City Veterinarian's Office said there were an estimated 12,000 dogs in the city and the number grows by the day.

Dog attacks

Alarmed by this scenario, Councilor Manuel Ingan Jr. has asked the city council to review an Animal Ordinance. Ingan's constituents have received at least three complaints of dogs attacking people in different parts of the city.

City Veterinarian Leandro Llorente assured the council that his office was doing its vaccination campaigns and extermination drive, although they have several constraints.

"For one, we don't have a service vehicle so we have to wait until we can borrow a vehicle from the city," he said.

Llorente said their 'no dog meat' initiative, while they are sharpshooters, are causing the ego of 10. "Naturally, people of that age already experience diminished ego eyesight," the explained.

Another councilor, Franklin Estrera, proposed that the dog extermination be replaced immediately with younger shooters.

"That's a valid supposition," chimed Councilor Benito Lampad, "otherwise, they might miss the dog and shoot the owner."

Night executions

Dog extermination are done at night every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, that while they have rid the streets of 500 stray dogs since January, Sesaro himself does not feel good about it.

"We are treating sick dogs on one hand while on the other hand, we are exterminating dogs which are not exactly sick."

He suggested that perhaps, the city government would embark on an educational campaign on the virtues of pet ownership.

FLOATING STORE
A store in Sta. Ana, Pampanga appears to float in the water as floods remain home in the entire province of Pampanga and the Central Luzon region.

Baguio, Thai city join hands in plan to cut energy use

BAGUIO CITY—The city government's solution to the country's budget deficit and an energy crisis is not a mere peso in a Republican Fund savings account, but investments in energy saving measures.

Mayor Braulio Yaranon signed on Wednesday an agreement with the city of Chiang Mai in Thailand to share alternative energy programs that are dedicated to reducing fuel consumption.

Chiang Mai Mayor Rossaliss Boonsupakorn's administration is developing a biological diesel that uses vegetable oil, but Thailand is also interested in the Philippines' coconut method using diesel additives, said Mr. Yaranon. The Baguio planning officer supervising environmental programs.

President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier urged government officials to use coco fuel in government vehicles this year.

Yaranon said the projects could cut down electricity and oil consumption in Baguio substantially to reduce its contributions to the national budget deficit.

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (Iclei) aided the Baguio-Chiang Mai agreement.

UN commitment

Iclei is advocating the Philippines' commitments in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. This is the United Nations-backed document, which seeks a cutback reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from at least 166 countries within a prescribed period to fight the destruction of the ozone layer.

Iclei is also supervising the Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) program, where Baguio is cited for piloting the once had programs in the country.

Pamela Gelleza Oppus, Iclei regional manager for Southeast Asia, said the Baguio-Chiang Mai agreement could point Baguio to ways by which it can tap institutional and financial resources of its sisterhood city ties with Asian or European countries to fund its environmental projects. Rhoda T. Calleja, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

"carbon trading" projects. The UN climate control convention tapped major economies, like Canada or the European Union, to buy every kilogram of carbon monoxide emissions that is reduced by smaller nations, which use energy saving mechanisms.

Jiangping Dattiganan, Chiang Mai's CCP coordinator, and the Thailand Environmental Institute assisted in a "carbon trading" transaction with San Francisco in the United States, which funds some of Thailand's ecological programs.

Gas reduction

According to a briefing paper, Chiang Mai is retooling his diesel or some of its public utility vehicles called sangtaew (pick-up trucks modified into mass transport vehicles), but the Thai City is also undertaking power reduction programs for its municipal offices.

The dominant said Chiang Mai is also pursuing the restoration of its "non-motorized transport," or the use of bicycles, rickshaws or carts in its major highways to completely reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions by 15 percent in 2012.

Aquitania said the previous city administration had pegged Baguio's reduction targets to 30 percent by 2010. Listed up among Baguio's energy saving measures is the conversion of its only landfill into a methane-to-electricity conversion plant, and the retrofitting of its streetlights into compact fluorescent lamps that could supply power to the facility.

Baguio is also planning the replacement of its concrete pavements with bricks to allow water to permeate into the ground.

But Aquitania is focusing on

Crisis threatens disaster training programs, plans

BAGUIO CITY—The fiscal crisis is threatening the implementation of disaster management programs of various government agencies and the private sector, according to participants of a regional workshop here of the Task Force for the Security of Critical Infrastructures (TFSCI).

Dr. Manuel Quintos, chief of the Baguio Oriental Hospital and Medical Center's emergency response team, said the city needs a trauma casualty management system that includes training in disaster response and a reliable communication system.

"The problem is that PD 1566 (Presidential Decree 1566 or the Disaster Control Act) does not provide money for training," Quintos said.

The Office of Civil Defense in the Cordillera also said the local calamity fund 5 percent of the estimated revenues of local governments, as stated in the Local Government Code, is no longer enough for disaster relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Vicente Tomanan, OCD Cordillera director, said the calamity fund is not enough considering that typhoons now are getting stronger.

Depleted funds

"After Typhoon Igme" (in July) and the other succeeding typhoons, the 5-percent calamity fund of various local governments allotted this year is almost depleted," Tomanan said.

He said with the proposed reduction of the internal revenue allotment (IRA) of LGUs, retaining funds for disaster management would be troublesome.

Despite limited funds, Dr. Manuel Parinas, BGHMC chief, said the hospital came out with a 24-hour hospital crisis policy response plan after the city was hit by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake in 1990.

Telecommunications firms, whose facilities are among those considered as "critical infrastructures," have been getting the help of barangays to conserve their properties.

Feliciano Tumonong, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) security chief for Northern Luzon, said they launched the Zamboanga 164 project early this year to secure their facilities from cable pilferers.

"But it seemed that we have to re-launch this program again," he said, adding that PLDT recorded four cases of cable theft in Baguio from July to August this year.

More security guards

Noel Bonsato, Smart Wireless Center manager here, said they decided to hire additional security guards in areas that transmission towers in the region.

"Securing" the security guards is also the problem of commercial banks in Baguio City.

Lorna Mayora, head of the Baguio-Benguet Bankers Association, said they decided to be assured that the security guards they get were not from fly-by-night agencies.

"After all, we are fully dependent on our security forces," Mayora said.

She said they also provide the guards regular training in emergency situations.

Professor Undersecretary Abraham Paragas-Lamare, who heads the TFSCI, said they have signed a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Health to hold emergency response training in the regions.

Paragas-Lamare also added the Philippine Information Technology and Protective Agency Operations Bulkpool to raise the qualifications of security guards, especially those assigned to critical infrastructures.

Paragas-Lamare had earlier said the country is considered a strong target of terrorism despite President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to pull out the thousand of troops in Iraq. Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Slain tiller's brother sues Army soldiers

DIPAO CITY—Thirty-two soldiers, including an Army sergeant, were charged Friday with allegedly murdering a Moro farmer and his pregnant wife following a raid on a village in Tagum City in Davao del Norte on Wednesday.

The complaint was filed by Talib Japalali, elder brother of Datoh Japalali, 37, before the city prosecutor's office in Tagum City.

In his complaint, Japalali, said his brother and Carmelita were sleeping inside their house in Barangay Binguerogan on the evening of Aug. 8 when soldiers from the Army's 403rd Infantry Battalion based in Compostela valley arrived.

Japalali said he then went his brother's house and saw the carnival of bloodshed.

He said the soldiers fired their weapons without provocation.

When the soldiers left, he said Bacar was found dead inside the couple's room while Carmelita was found slumped near the entrance door.

The task force headmen of the Philippine (TFSP) in Davao said other witnesses supported Japalali's claim that Bacar and Carmelita were murdered by the soldiers, led by a Sgt. Jerry Ospina.

TFSP said five other witnesses also live near the victims' house.

In a statement, the TFSP said Osmalik Ladia and Rasalen Dalhem also executed affidavits before Prosecutor Manuvers Gidoc Reyes of Tagum City.

They said after firing on the couple's house, the soldiers also opened fire at their house but missed them.

Col. Agnes Arbuizo, military spokesperson for South Western Mindanao, earlier said Talib, a Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebel and his wife were killed during a 15-minute encounter with 25 dissidents in Barangay Binguerogan.

He said the soldiers recovered firearms after the clash.

The MILF denied Talib was a member and said he belonged to the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Ustd Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the death of the couple was probably triggered by a land dispute they had with another farmer.

Kabalu said by all indications, the death of the couple was plain murder.

Arbuizo said they were already reporting that a controversy would arise from the encounter.

He said as far as the military is concerned, there was a gunfight and the rebel was killed during the clash.

But Japalali maintained there was no encounter.

He also denied the military's claim his brother belonged to the MILF or any rebel group.

Japalali said Bacar was an ordinary farmer and had no criminal records.

Zenaida Reyes, spokesperson of the TFSP said they were assisting the relatives' relatives in pursuing the case against the soldiers. Jeff Pat Sapay and Anthony Alfeda, PDI Mindanao Bureau

E. Visayas' most wanted slain in gunfight

MASBATE CITY—The most wanted man in Eastern Visayas was killed in a gunfight with policemen after he resisted arrest in San Fernando town on Simara Island, 150 km from here, at 1:30 p.m.

Killed was Reynaldo Cabangbang, of Malabon Street, Ormoc City as an ordered hit man who had been long wanted for a string of murder cases, including those of five policemen.

Reinvented from Cabugao area a .45 cal. pistol he grabbed from his police escort when he engaged in the gun fire. Cry-on Thursday.

Supt. Alfredo Saberon, Southern Leyte police director said Cabangbang, who had been arrested on Philippines Exchange City, was escorted by Sorigao police for supposed medical treatment at a hospital there when he grabbed the handgun of his escort and fled.

He was later reported to have taken a second hand bound for San Fernando, a town on Simara Island.

Saberon's and the Sorigao police immediately tipped them all of Cabangbang escape.

Jose Arnulfo Visayas Bureau

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INQUIRER Mindanao

Editor Jun Bandayan
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Hard life for hard-hitting broadcasters

By Gemelino Lacorte
Davao City

BATTLE-SCARRED radio broadcaster Ferdie Limtiaco has survived three attempts on his life, but up to this day, he remains unfazed. Scathing remarks on the air, he says, is the only way for broadcasters to live.

"In broadcasting, you have to be brutal," says Limtiaco, 46, showing the chrysler scars on his legs. "If you come in too softly, no one will listen to you."

At least 56 broadcast and print journalists have been killed since democracy was restored in the Philippines in 1986 after the fall of the Marcos dictatorship, according to media organizations.

Reality

In 1994, Limtiaco narrowly escaped death during a shoot-out with members of a "militant (car customer)" association in Davao Oriental. His companion was killed.

About 12 years later, he survived an attack by communist rebels on his radio station dxBA in Davao City for five of his competitors – an announcer, reporter, technician and two executives—died.

Irked by his scathing commentaries/remarks on the air, a New People's Army hardcore squad riddled with bullets the radio station where Limtiaco was anchoring an announcement program.

Threats and death threats were rife that radio people must face if they want to make in the business. "Kung mag-radio ka ngayon, mayroon nang 10 pro ang sa'yo, in one way or another," he says.

The hard-hitting commentator now has a morning radio program on radio dxDW in Davao City. The program is called "Ugan Pako," a Cebuano term which refers to a sudden burst of gunfire at the slightest pull of the trigger.

"If there were 500, 10 would be fine, we have the regulator killings now," he said.

Grim reality

Limtiaco's situation is the grim reality confronting all radio announcers.

Radio has always been a "eating" game, says Nelson Caberte, who anchors radio dzOM's "Mister Balita." He says "Every radio announcer's survival depends on the kind of program he airs.

"In such environment," he adds, "you have to study closely what your listeners want."

Judging from the results of independent surveys conducted among radio stations each year, hard-hitting commentaries, aside from soap operas, are the stuff that make ratings soar. "Give them purely professional radio programming and they'll fall asleep," Caberte says.

So, in order to sell, a broadcaster must adopt a hard-hitting stance. But doing so sometimes places his life on the line.

Death threats, says radio dyAD's Stephen Mutungan, are common fare among broadcasters. Yet, they are not given assurance that in times of trouble, their boss network will back them up, he says.

Is it worth it?

"Sometimes, I (wonder) if it's worth risking it out in this profession," Mutungan says. "If something happens to you, you do not have assurance that somebody will take care of your family, give scholarships to your children."

"You comment at your own risk," says Limtiaco, whose hospitalization expenses after the 1994 attack on his radio station was shouldered by police authorities.

"The network will only be there for you in case of libel. If you make mistakes on the air, when someone comes walking outside, you're on your own," he said.

In Davao City, over 22 radio stations compete for listeners, and this somehow leads to stiffer competition, says Caberte. "The approval of more franchises has polluted the airwaves, ushered in the entry of corporate-owned and even increased competition among the radio stations."

Some of the stations only pay their announcers as low as P500 a month, forcing most of them to look for "other income sources" elsewhere. These range from buying "block time," or the practice of paying the radio station for airtime and selling it to sponsors and advertisers, to the outright questionable practice known in the industry as "BC-DC" (get-rich and collect, defend and collect) or attacking personalities on the air, just to collect fees to keep quiet.

"Since the pay is not enough, some resort to this unscrupulous practice (BC-DC), which eventually gets back at them," adds Mutungan, who anchors dxDD's morning commentary "Bantay."

Caberte says it's easier for some people to harness your talents because they are not organized.

Silent enemies

Since his days in Bombo Radyo, Caberte has grown accustomed to the death threats. But he's more afraid of those who never say a word than those who do.

Mutungan says he is used to receiving death threats, through mobile phone text messages and the telephone. "In every news you take, you have to gauge whether your network is going to back you up or this one or just leave you out in the cold," he says.

The most that broadcasters do, he says, is to strike a balance in their commentaries. "We just let the callers speak, and yet, we can't help hurting people, too."

"You won't know the personalities you have provoked. Most of the time, they're just keeping quiet in the corner," says Caberte. "So many stations compete, they're selling aside quality programming, as long as the program sells."

"These days, we're selling each other. 'Let's start playing love songs,'" says Mutungan. "But what will happen if all the people hear on the radio are love songs?"

ABOUT 300 journalists staged a protest rally outside Camp Crame in Quezon City, denouncing the recent killings of fellow journalists.

Senate wants to limit local, foreign borrowings

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media forum that he had refiled a bill which proposes a limit on domestic and foreign borrowings for the state. Ban to 'fit' years to current 'fiscal debt service payments, controlled to be affordable within the context of budget priorities.

"Debt servicing has been eating a substantial portion of the annual government budget," Drilon said during the monthly Equitas in Tesda forum. "Because of mandatory interest payments, there is little room for expenditures in the national budget for urgent social and physical infrastructures needed to stimulate the economy."

Debt service payments to absorb amounts said as a percentage of the total budget have increased dramatically starting in 1998, Drilon noted.

Surge in expenses

From P78 billion or 13.9 percent of expenditures in 1997, interest payments surged to P170 billion or 24.6 percent in 2003. In 2003, the amount reached P223 billion or 28 percent of the total budget.

Under his proposed "Debt Cap Act," which Drilon introduced earlier during the 12th Congress, the short-term debt of the national government and government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) shall not exceed an amount equivalent to 100 percent of the country's gross national product (GNP).

Senate Bill No. 1118 also proposes that within another five years and thereafter until succeeding debts shall not exceed 80 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

In 2003, the national government's debt was estimated at P2.88 trillion, or 79.1 percent of the GDP. As of August this year, this has reached P3.3 trillion, Drilon said.

"Being realistic, you cannot stop borrowing. This is precisely the purpose of a debt cap bill in order to impose a limitation on the author ity of the Department of Finance to borrow," he said.

Fiscal discipline

If enacted into law, the bill is expected to mandate the government to strictly observe a fiscal discipline in all areas of government operations. The government should live within its means by maintaining deficit spending to levels that will ensure fiscal sustainability," Drilon said.

Similarly, government cannot default in the payments of its debts, escalating debt service payments in the General Appropriations Act have effectively rendered non-expenditures for social services and physical infrastructures, he said.

Drilon said the passage of the Debt Cap Act was imperative due to the runaway fiscal deficit, owing to the debts incurred by GOCCs, particularly the National Power Corp.

Because how a total debt of P3.3 trillion, or over 50 percent of the national government's debt of P3.3 trillion. He hoped this year several presidential reach P3.3 billion.

Abolition of GOCCs

The Cabinet will meet on Monday in the Palace to discuss government changes and the possible abolition of GOCCs which have drained the national government of billions of pesos in subsidies and fat paychecks.

In an interview over dzRH, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he expected the Cabinet meeting of Monday and Department of Budget and Management to come up with their assessments on who among the government representatives on the boards and management of GOCCs would be replaced or reappointed.

Malacañang earlier said it would not limit

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rate to kick out government nominees on the boards of GOCCs who did not heed the President's call to relinquish their fat salaries and perks.

"We will appeal directly to the board of directors of GOCCs. If they cannot be persuaded then the only solution is to replace those who do not cooperate," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in an interview with dzMM radio.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin requested that the directors and top management of GOCCs had ignored Ms Arroyo's call to slash their compensation and bonuses since 2001.

In a briefing, Bunye said the President was firm on cutting down the expenses of GOCCs and she expected them to cooperate. "The President has the power to appoint and she also has the power to fire those in the GOCCs," Bunye said.

"If the national government, if some LGUs, if some members of Congress are prepared to sacrifice, GOCCs should likewise share the burden," Bunye said. "The idea is all government agencies must take part in our austerity measures and we expect the GOCCs, through their respective boards, would be responsible and heed the President's call."

Sinking popularity

As this developed, Malacañang yesterday said President Arroyo was not in danger of being ousted from power in the face of her sinking popularity and the wrong perception that she cheated at the recent elections.

"We have our problems, but we also have our bright spots. Even before former (Senate) Chiefio said (about) the President being overthrow (because due to her sinking popularity) was de-linked and has no basis," Bunye said in an interview with DMM radio.

Malacañang blamed the fiscal crisis for the President's poor showing in the May 10 SWS survey by the Social Weather Stations where her performance rating plunged to 12 points from 28 points the previous month. But it was only on Aug. 23, the day after the survey was taken, that the President declared to the country was in fiscal crisis.

Bunye said that investor confidence would be boosted if at least one of the six measures being pushed by President Macapagal-Arroyo were to be approved by Congress.

Deutsche Bank warned Friday that the President could be ousted in one power because of the people's growing disenchantment over her incompetence and tolerance of corruption.

Bunye cited the robust economic growth in the first half of this year and its resultant stock market which was a four-year high last week among the bright spots in the President's administration.

He said that "once Congress can get together for at least a major vital tax measure, investor confidence will soar considerably."

The Palace is pushing for eight revenue measures to raise P80 billion for the government coffers.

No to taxes

But in Congress, Bayan Muna party-list rep. Satur Ocampo yesterday urged President Arroyo to reverse her liberal trade policies instead of imposing new and higher taxes.

Ocampo said new taxes ought to be imposed instead on foreign goods, except oil and those that are not produced here to raise government revenues and to put the country back on its feet again.

"The influx of foreign goods due to reduced tariffs, which has driven many medium and small local entrepreneurs out of business and has caused massive unemployment, is mainly driving the government out of business, too," Ocampo said.

He said the lowering of tariffs on imported products to one major factor for the millions Filipinos to poverty level existence.

Ocampo cited official data which showed that the government reduced tariffs on agricultural products by 45.6 percent and on industrial products by 48.2 percent between 1999 and 2001, resulting in estimated annual losses of P5.88 billion. With reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Cynthia D. Rabano

BUTUYOC MIGUEL SINOLINGHONG PADILLA DOROTHY

Five doctors who followed their dreams

Front page A1

yes, a special project of the Bulacan Polymedic Cooperative Hospital in South Cotabato to address the alarming rate of avoidable blindness.

Since then, he and his team have served close to 6,000 people afflicted with eye ailments.

"This is my life's work," he said. "This is the reason I am here. I like to think of myself as a doctor for everybody. My objective is not to see people get blind just because they are poor."

Some have dispensed finished eyeglasses their patients, saying it provides employment to optician/optometrists (Opts) changing the "right" customers for their delicate work, but he keeps on.

"I believe an issue nothing in this world is free—a tool for others to follow or to abandon," he said.

Holistic approach

Like Mendiolang, assistant Dr. Edsha C. Miguel of the University of the Philippines joined to the mission at age 21 the United States and pursues the so-called American Dream.

Instead, she used her talent, time and effort to address the acute health needs of rural folk.

In 1986, Miguel and seven other volunteer doctors traveled to her native Palawan and in Leyte under the Agape Rural Program of the Rural Ministry of the Campus Crusade for Christ to "share God's love through action."

At least 30,000 persons have been given medical and dental care and taught preventive health care under the program. Palawan residents, for instance, were taught how to use bamboo pipes for drinking potable water systems and providing training in natural farming and livestock raising.

"I believe that if you want to instill any change, the approach should be holistic and if you want to really make an impact, you must concentrate on the total areas where the need is so large," she said.

Miguel said she had encouraged many fellow doctors, especially graduates of the UP-Philippine General Hospital, to serve in rural communities before thinking of working overseas because the Filipino people shouldered part of their education expenses.

"I tell them there is so much that they can do for the country like building their expertise to the next people. Of course, you can't stop them from leaving if they want to, but at least they can share at least a little," she said.

Fortunately, many young doctors joined her and her team, and ended up staying.

"I believe that if you challenge the graduates and provide them an avenue to express their patriotism, there is no country and their fellow men, they willfully," she said.

Miguel has set her sights on asking the program to other provinces such as Cagayan and Nueva Ecija. Doing so little more than a doctor to heed God's call to help others.

"If you are people change and communities become better, you will say that there's hope for the Philippines and a lot of opportunities to share the goodness of God," she said.

Passion for service

Noninfectious Florencio C. Dorotan of Ipsala, Isabela, found the opportunity to do good in the People's Heath Program financed largely by the Asian Development Bank, one of the programs of the Legaspi Days na Bahaging sa ng Gumbaranan, a nongovernment organization that she helped found.

Dorotan has been involved in social action since her UP days, primarily through the UP Student Catholic Action.

There she found her passion for service, which she has expressed in the remote barangays of Tagaytay where she and her group saw many cases of tuberculosis.

Because they lacked knowledge, most of the patients considered the disease a death sentence. They did not seek medication and did not even dare venture from their homes.

Dorotan and her group spread the word on health and disease prevention, particularly on TB, the encouraged the patients to seek treatment, telling them that TB was a curable disease if diagnosed early enough.

From focusing on an integrated, area based development program and receiving health care, the program proponents spread their work to include caring for the environment, agrarian reform and rural development, gender and local governance and cooperative operations.

Among their projects are food production, building of artesian wells and toilets, nutrition education including breast feeding, and making supplementary cereals out of mango, rice and corn.

"We realized that it is not just about health," Dorotan said. "We have to help them put food on their table and give them jobs. One of the reasons 60 percent of Filipinos die without seeing a doctor is that they can't afford it. I've always said health is a basic human right, but it has become a commodity."

Helping rural folk gain access to that commodity is Dorotan's mission. "It's easier a feeling to see hope again in the community's eyes," she said.

Closer to the poor

Dr. Rodolfo A. Buenaga, a surgeon, is really living a medical service closer to the poor by bringing medical assistance to the remote areas.

Buenaga, chief of the Ilocos Regional Hospital in Dagupan, Ilocos del Norte, conceptualized and organized the Surgical Outreaching Extension Program (SOEP) in 1989 because the thought of being confined within the four walls of the operating room bothered him.

"It has always been my dream to expand my work ... outside the hospital, where there is a dire need for surgical service. My vision is to make our surgical experience available to more people," he said.

For the past 15 years, the SOEP has conducted 110 surgical outreaching activities, serving more than 10,000 people in the Ilocos, Benguet and Cagayan regions.

Operations include treatment for hernia and thyroid problems and self-inflicted wounds.

The SOEP gives the poor access to free surgical services. The local government units pitch in by shouldering part of the cost. The local health workers gain valuable knowledge in treating patients.

"What is amazing is that the collaboration [among us] was instrumental. It makes us realize how good of the people," Buenaga said.

Like the other Ilocano for Health, Buenaga maintains a private practice although his work at the IRMP takes up much of his time.

"Maybe I'm crazy, but I believe that I was able to do enough for myself so that I would have time and resources for others who need it more," he said.

He never thought the SOEP would become as big a project as it is now, garnering awards for its courage, when he started in 1989. It was just a dream that he was keen on fulfilling.

"Now I say, don't let go of your dream, Pursue it. Then if you get it, you can dream some more," he said.

'People still care'

For eye specialist Dr. Domingo B. Padilla, the dream was to give sight to indigent Filipinos needing a corneal transplant.

But sans eyes were rejected to the end plight of people waiting for corneas when she was a resident at the UP-PGH.

"We had a lot of patients who were blind because of measles," Padilla said. "All they needed was a cornea for them to see again... It made me feel bad because I could not do that. I was not able to help them."

There were many years of frustration because she did not immediately get the cooperation that she needed to realize her dream of setting up an eye bank.

Finally, the Sarao Lucia International Eye Bank of Manila was set up at the Makati Medical Center in 1999.

The eye bank is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week facility that collects, processes, stores and distributes high-quality eye tissues. It has provided eye tissues to thousands of indigent patients nationwide for free, and many have regained their sight because of it.

"When you help, you touch the poor that people still care," Padilla said. "It's about faith, that people are still willing to help them even if in these times, it is getting harder to do good and still survive."

Troubled children of 9/11: Legacy of loss

SHADOWS of a grown-up and a child follow the "Honor the Fallen" memorial at New York's Union Square Park on the eve of the third anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States. This memorial contains the names and portraits of more than 1,000 US soldiers killed in Iraq.

Front page A2

wall were images of towers falling and planes crashing, but she deeply treasure, devastating stories of a pastor's church.

"I was seeing my dad die over and over and over again," said Sarah Van Auken, 11, whose father, Kenneth Van Auken, worked at Cantor Fitzgerald. New York Times News Service

Soon on your cellphones: Chinese 'text-novelas'

From page A1

short message novel), a new literary genre for the hurried masses in a society that seems to be redefining what it means to be literate.

As a critically acclaimed writer of dense, downtrodden novels, Qian said he had had to develop a guilty conscience.

Moreover, as a writer in a country that tends not to pay its authors very well, he faced a challenge immediately familiar to writers everywhere: how to make a living creating real prose.

Now at the age of 44, the author thinks he has found a solution to both problems.

Weighing in at a mere 4,300 words, "Out of the Province" will be published bit by bit to a diverse set of cell phone readers at a fee (each 178 characters at a time—including spaces and punctuation marks—is free daily in a lifetime).

What "readers" may choose to place a call to the "publishing" house to, a short time ago, start receiving, jumping to listen to a recording of each day's story as it unfolds. All this for a small fee charged, like several years ago, directly to the readers' mobile phone accounts.

Thinking for readers

"When I worked in advertising, I learned to think for the consumer, make a movie. I have learned to think for the readers," the author, whose real name is He Ximiao, said in an interview on Friday.

"In this age, with a flood of information, I thought it was cruel to force readers to wrestle with a 300,000-word book."

The idea of publishing his book by cell phone evolved naturally, said He. "My last book, 'Girl Boss,' was published on Sina.com in installments, and I found it very convenient to read it online. I thought with the change of technology there could be new ways of reading, and then I thought of my cell phone, because I am a huge cell phone fan. It has become an indispensable electronic organ for me."

It will become an important source of income, too.

With the publication of "Out of the Province," He has become a media star. He said he received an advance of more than ¥200,000, the checks from Interactive.

Marketing

He said his book was about "two people who have a passionate affair, which is not supported by morality or law, but is very understandable."

Though others will dispute whether he is truly invented the short message novel form, he had an understanding of how fast cell phones are changing life here, and a keen grasp of marketing.

In addition to providing the usual functions, like e-mail, Web surfing, instant messaging, dating, and global positioning, cell phones are huge for the kind that are already commonplace in East Asia. China's mobile phone world has become the latest frontier of individual enterprise. New York Times News Service

Sunday BIZ

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

RAYMUND Miranda says he made acting leaps in his young

'Lifer's' natural curiosity takes him to the top

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

RAYMUND T. Miranda describes himself as a "lifer"—he has the natural curiosity to learn about anything and everything, and he has the guts to do things he knows nothing about.

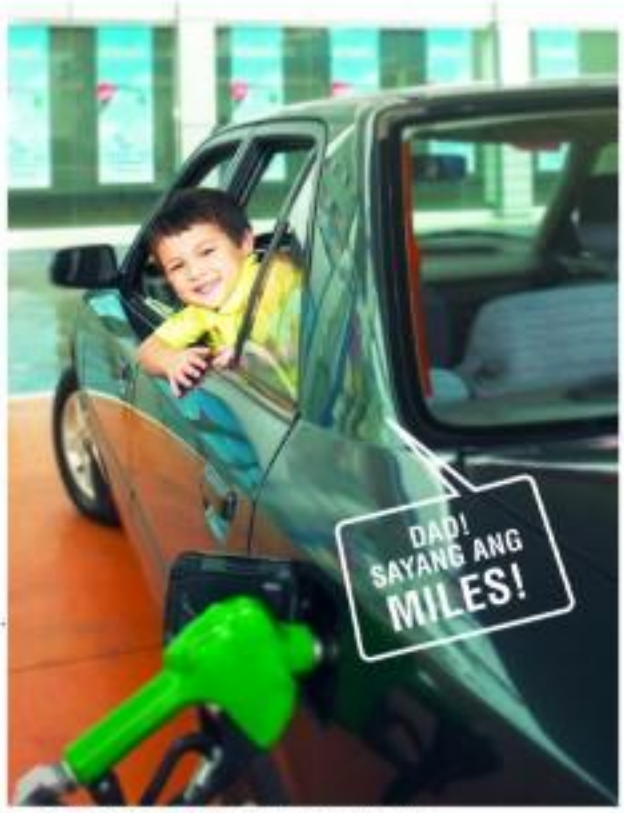
FIRST JOB

This inclusive sweeping a role to play the guitar in a school program even if he did not know how. He eventually learned by asking his classmates to teach him, to a matter of weeks.

His "lifer" trait paid off. Despite not finishing his degree he is now the highest ranking Filipino in Walt Disney Co. Miranda is the managing director of Walt Disney Television Int'l. in charge of the Disney Channel in Southeast Asia and Korea.

Broadcasting has been in his blood for over 20 years even if his first undertaking was medicine. He says he and his siblings were lucky because they had supportive relatives who sent them to Ateneo and Maryknoll for their elementary schooling. And the relatives made good investments. Raymund and his brother got scholarships in exclusive high school at Ateneo although he also passed the entrance exams at the

LIFER'S 02



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Business ethics is simply the Golden Rule

"There is No Such Thing as Business Ethics".
By John C. Maxwell
Warner Business Books, 2003

By Dante M. Velasco
Contributor

IT IS one those healthy signs of the times that the subject of "corporate morality" is now heralded in classrooms of graduate business schools.

Some schools make it an "elective." Others make it a "core course." It says a lot about a school which makes "ethics" a required subject.

In the not so distant past, this was considered a "soft" subject. "Course for Jocks". A student of a "hard" course would diversify up.

The Executive Read, more than a year ago, reviewed a book that placed "hopes aswam" over corporate ethics. The book was a best seller. But it actually has given leaders and managers a way of resolving ethical dilemmas in the marketplace by subjecting them to higher principles of right and wrong.

Two much earlier time philosopher/theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, struggling amid the abuses of Nazism in and out of prison, wrote a book simply titled "Ethics"—and he said that in difficult ethical situations, not "all but the highest truth is the individual"—even if you have to "sullied in the world."

The subject of Ethics is already a difficult subject, which an adjective (i.e. it—legal ethics, business ethics, environmental ethics, medical ethics—and the issues become more complicated.

EXECUTIVE READ

In the book of John C. Maxwell comes like a whiff of fresh mind admits he said that "all ethics is universal." Thus the title of his book is misleading enough: "There is No Such Thing as 'Business Ethics.'"

He rightly points out "One of our problems is that ethics is never a business issue or a social issue or a political issue. It is always a personal issue."

He offers the Golden Rule as the only guide to ethical issues. At first blush, you would think he is oversimplifying a complicated issue. But he would be somewhat of what academics call "reductionist."

The Golden Rule is much too conscious, you'd say, but when Maxwell tells that Jesus had taken Christ and Confucius said about it, those subjects have been over-serious, you are not serious.

The Rule is also embedded in the theology of Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism.

This Yoruba Proverb (Nigeria) means it astonishing: "Don going to take a poisoned stick to punch a hole and should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts."

Actually, Maxwell shows that he does not want to engage us on an "ethical debate" and deal with difficult and write questions on ethics.

One who has been a counselor to CEOs and who mentors many people around the globe may have just decided not to engage in endless hypothetical questions and, yes, hypothetical answers.

The book's value is established by the author's breadth of exposure to CEOs, leaders, political leaders and ordinary men and women who need his guidance.

So, the issue is fleshed out by real-life struggles and real life decisions to stick to one's convictions and to be consistent amidst pressures to change one's decision or be swindled to another course.

Maxwell speaks of Hyacinth Simeon, Hong Kong leader of McKinsey & Company, who was asked by billionaire Reverend Hughes to help him with Pentecostal Pictures.

After examining Rasmussen's problems and considering Hughes's unorthodox approach to business, Rosen declined.

Maxwell assesses: "Rosen would not take advantage of another person." Yet, it would have been easy to fall. Hughes for "innovative time," in some circumstances might have done without any pang of conscience.

Coach Mark Richt was recruited by the University of Georgia to develop its football team. In the time, the team became a district championship in 2002—the first in 20 years for the University. What did Richt do? Maxwell answers: "He focus wasn't and isn't on championships. It's on character."

It is easy to dismiss "ethics" when you are running a small operation. You'd say that if you go big time, the issues of ethics is lofty.

Henry Ford thought otherwise when he was young. He found that if our principles were right, the area over which they were applied did not matter. Time is only a matter of the available time.

According to the Ethics Resource Center in Washington D. C., companies that are dedicated to doing the right thing, have a serious commitment to social responsibility, and act on it consistently are more profitable than those who don't.

The book has an abundance of good, bad and sad stories about how ethical issues are revealed, confronted or sidestepped.

Decision-making are the accounts of corporate executives who now take ethics seriously—and have, in fact, come up with codes of conduct to live by. They are simple and straightforward—meaning you won't come away hitting the point.

For instance, this code is as basic as it is effective: "Business decisions must be made for another to only relate our value to the client was expected to spend no less." Lubin, consultant!

Finally, Maxwell names "ethical predictability." Yes, trust is earned, not given. And you can't do the right thing come what may. In this world—corporate, the arts, engineering, law, medicine, construction—consistency in conduct is important.

The book quotes Justice Potter, also Potter Stewart who said, "Mr. who flunks with the current, who does not guide himself according to higher principles, who has no ideal, no conviction—such a man is a mere atom of the wealth formless—a thing moved, instead of a living and moving being—as echo, not a voice."

Ethics, after all, is not an diverse branch of philosophy. You can't practice it in your workplace unless you have people in your workplace upholding it, or consistently encouraging it.

But, with this book, you come more thinking the world would not be such a mess. Ethics after all, is still living up to—ethical principles and how do we act

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REAL ESTATE IN AUSTRALIA INFO CENTER

'Lifer's' natural curiosity takes him to the top

(left photo) RAYMUND on guitar (extreme left) with members of the Dokung Med. (Mercy Mission) family — at the Chans and daughters Ellen and Renee.

from page 1

Philippine Science High School.

Raymund's father worked for the Development Bank of the Philippines while his mom was a Child Welfare Specialist who worked on the side. Raymund considered Cotabato Aquino was one of their clients so they lived near Times Street, for home to this day.

Miranda enrolled in BS Biology in UP hoping to become a doctor. But it was inevitable for him to shift courses considering his passion and achievement in high school. A member of the Dokung Med, the theater group of Ateneo, Raymund had an affinity toward performing.

Disc jockey

In 1980, he auditioned in a radio station and got accepted. He stayed at night for a year and was shuttling between UP and Makati on board a four. But, the assembly, round two their close joining Ateneo and Makati, they met PL 99. His salary was P700.

"My parents were supporting me," he recalls.

But when his pay started going up he took over his schooling costs. He also had a band while in college and earned a few hundred pesos from gigs which supported his tuition.

And so he excelled, going to Biology and graduated Broadcast Communications.

"When I started working, everything just fell into it. I shifted to Broadcasting and eventually dropped out," Miranda says.

For a few years he worked as a disc jockey with the handles Ray Martin. It is during this time Rowena Miranda[illegible]

Happy though he was in his cheery field, Miles Makes, a radio veteran made him think. He asked him, "Do you see yourself in a job forever? If not, you should go into an allied field."

He took the advice to heart and expanded into allied fields like radio production, radio promotions, training of colegers.

"I was fascinated with advertising promotions," he recalls.

In 1987, he joined GMA Network Inc where he was as VP Creative Services in 1992. He was involved in shows like Business Today, Pricing Line. "I owe GMA. It gave me the opportunities."

It was in GMA where he took the opposite way to learn as much as he could about the broadcast media. "I am naturally inquisitive and I was blessed with people who answered my questions."

And in exchange, Miranda says he likes answering mail also. Jokes time to touch anyone who is interested to learn.

His interest in variety and the industry he is in keeps him up to date about new trends and this necessary for his role as head of Disney Channel in southeast Asia and Korea.

The says he has two daughters — 13 year old Ellen and 11 year old Renee keep him young.

How he got the job at Disney was no unexpected route. One of the producers of GMA applied for a job at Disney and told him about an opening. Miranda climbed out the set which required the applicant to fax a CV to Hong Kong.

"It was a series of events. He had just bought a fax machine and I had no wife, Claire (Miranda), a broker series, dealt me a contract where many it became a career."

The was in Hong Kong to call from the Disney office in Hong Kong for a phone interview. Then he met with the Asia Pacific executive director and finally was flown to Hong Kong for the final interview.

Miranda was supposed to head the Philippine office only but "something happened. He died in the Philippines" to be was sent to Singapore.

He is thankful his previous jobs gave him the experiences and learnings to qualify for his current post.

Having Gone a DJ gave him a man's perspective on top into production part from valuable insights in eventually devising strategies and procedures. And his love for life in general made him ask about everything and learn on the same time.

"Uncle Manuel" Jimenez touted me. He was a tough boss and somehow He demands a certain level of performance. For him to grow was the rule," he says.

And he says he cannot forget the staff he mentor at Dokung Med taught me. "I continue to remember the staff he is right as."

RAYMUND with his family including seven-year-old Ellen (Chinese) and Renee (4th)

West and east converge in a natural dressing

By Maurice Malanes
Philippine Graphic Revista

BAGUIO CITY—Everyone food is generally bland. So asserts Eugenia Aquino of the colonial era like Marco Polo and Ferdinand Magellan were not only awed by Asia's gold and pearls but also by the continent's herbs and spices, which, for a long time, had enhanced the taste and aroma of Oriental food.

But a bland taste or flavor could help balance the too sweet, too salty or too pungent tendency of Orientals, particularly Filipinos who love to add pots, soy sauce with hot chili and bagoong or calamansi to an already salty food fare and gorge on sugar-laden kalo-kalo for dessert.

It is this "shocking and balancing" that one can discover in three kinds of natural and preservative-free dressing, which are proudly made in Baguio.

The convergence of something French, Italian and Asian was used in crafting Pinoy in these three kinds of dressing has made the new products bestsellers.

The woman behind these health dressings is Aurora "Aring" Tamayo-Bautista, an entrepreneur, writer, educator, mother and spiritual counselor.

Named "Iggy's House," each of the new products—French, Italian and strawberry dressings—has an interesting history.

The products' history was built on friendships, acharacships and business partnerships Aurora and her businessman and sportsman husband, Leonides or "Dex," established with other people here and from opposite ends of the globe.

French connection

It must have been a blessed encounter when French couple Dr. Robert and Fernande Fox, came to Baguio in 1978 and the Bautistas were among the first persons to become their friends.

Rene Salazar, whose doghouse manufactory established here in the early 1980s, asked Dr. Fox to help set up and head a junior college.

Shortly afterwards, however, Dr. Fox suffered a stroke. Although he survived, the French anthropologist begged off to accept the job because of his health.

But in love with Baguio's climate, environs and its wonderful people such as the Bautistas, Dr. Fox and his wife opted to make Baguio their home.

They later bought out a business in under Mrs. Fox home. Employing a cook from a retired friend, Mrs. Fox sought to put up a restaurant serving French cuisine.

She convinced Dex and Aaring to join her as business partners in the restaurant, which they called Chez Riviera (House by the River).

In that restaurant a salad dressing customer requested for was one which was derived from a cookbook Mrs. Fox inherited from her grandmother, an excellent cook.

"Each time people tasted it, they would like to order a bottle," recalls Aaring.

Although Chez Riviera closed after the Fox couple moved to Manila, Dex and Aaring nurtured the legacy of the French cuisine that Mrs. Fox introduced.

They put up in a new place another French restaurant they called Bistando (after Mrs. Fox's given name). The French restaurant, which also played French music, eventually closed in 1986, but the Bautistas pursued the restaurant business, shifting to Filipino cuisine.

So, the legacy of that French connection with the Fox couple now persists in the form of Aaring's salad dressing products.

From hobby to business venture, tasting has embarked on a hobby of transforming the salad dressing derived from Mrs. Fox's grandmother's cookbook into something that can satisfy the Filipino palate.

The original French dressing was basically vinegar, oil, mustard and spices and was, accordingly to Filipino taste, bland.

"I made this more Pinoy by adding garlic salt and some sugar," says Aaring. She did the same to the original Italian dressing.

AARING Tamayo-Bautista

Aaring also evolved her strawberry dressing from a raspberry dressing she read about in an old American food magazine.

"After reading that, I thought of coming out with something fragrant. I used strawberry, which are abundant here," she says.

And the beauty of it all is that Aaring uses natural, if not organic, ingredients for her products.

"We raise our own strawberries and bell peppers (all used in the dressing) in our 'happy soil,'" she says, referring to the compost-fed soil in the family's five organic greenhouses where tomatoes and leafy greens such as various types of lettuce are also cultivated.

At first, making dressings was just a hobby for Aaring. She would then give away the bottled dressings as gifts to friends during Christmas.

Unknown to her, however, the gifts that she was giving away out of love and friendship would turn out later as a promising business venture.

Last Christmas, for example, Aaring gifted business Hardware Lazon Bautista chief Wally Bernardez with a few bottles of three kinds of salad dressing.

Bernardez, in turn, gifted a couple of bottles of the dressing to Inquirer national editor Jun Bautista.

Also an entrepreneur and advocate of organic farming and healthy diet, Bautista last April sought out Aaring, offering him still to become the sole distributor of the dressing products in Manila.

Packed in almost 300-ml bottles, the products—particularly the strawberry dressing—clicked in Manila.

Every two weeks, Bautista would order three boxes (each box contains 24 bottles) of each of the three kinds of dressing.

If she includes local customers here and some occasional orders from a friend in Singapore with what Bautista recalls, Aaring estimates that an average of 240 bottles are sold daily.

A family affair

Although the dressing products were Aaring's idea, members of the Bautista family are involved in one way or another.

Before the salad dressings were first sent out into the market, Aaring had to get the quality approval of Dex, the "official taster."

The Bautista children who helped design the "Iggy's House" brand name label.

The brand was named after the Bautista couple's eldest son who passed away in 1993.

Helping promote the products are three people—a proof that a home-based industry can help generate jobs in this country with highest of unemployed.

Aaring seeks to continue improving and evolving the family's dressing products to meet demands of clients. She reveals, for instance, that she will come out with another package of diabetic-friendly dressing products.

And inspired by an idea from Bautista, Aaring has invited two gourmet cooks to help her write a cookbook using "Iggy's House's" dressing products.

Also experimenting on pickled mangoes, cajeta and atsuplyas or native ground, Aaring continues to explore new ideas and new possibilities for new products, which, she says, can create new jobs.

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Gaisano goes into unchartered territory– food

THE GIRLARO'S love for shopping spilled over to the food business in the opening of the Manila-based restaurant chain Gerry's Grill at the newly-frozen in Cebu City.

But the Cebuanos saved out here. This Gerry's Grill, after all, is still all Cebuano—it local because of the business partners behind it—Jose Gaisano and Odyssa Inocal.

Coming from different business backgrounds, the two entrepreneurs-to-unchartered territories—their food business—but not without success. For starters, they share a dependable name they could trust.

"Gerry and I go a long way back to college and even then, I knew him to someone who loved good food. I wasn't surprised then when Gerry's Grill came to be and became a success," says Inocal.

Back in college in the '80s at the then Marchand Maritime College, Inocal struck up a friendship with the guy whom he remembers as fun-and food-loving. That guy was Gerry Apolinario, after whom the rapidly expanding Gerry's Grill was named, and that friendship sustained throughout the years.

Forward to 2004. Inocal is now into the transportation business while Apolinario has become an established restaurateur. Two worlds that may possibly never meet but did in April when decided to partner with Inocal to open up Gerry's Grill in Cebu.

In the mere thrills, it is known. But applicants grow by branch the first truth as a partnership for a Gerry's branch. Inocal, a Cebu native, is just about the right person.

Twenty-three-year-old Jose Gaisano, on the other hand, has a family career that rings a familiar bell in the Queen City of the South. But the Gaisanos are more associated with the retail business.

"We ventured before into the food business with Light Bistro (along Mango Drive) here in Cebu. But that's about it. Our decision to put up Gerry's here was this very well thought of by the family and we know we can never go wrong," explains Gaisano.

A business management graduate from the Ateneo in Manila, Gaisano may ironically are handin with the name Gerry's Grill of their, being based in Cebu, most of his life. What he knew of however, was the food.

"When the idea was first launched to us, I asked what Gerry's Grill was. When I was reminded that I already tasted their food when we had a party at the Libis branch, I instantly recognized it. There was no doubt it would make it in my hometown," Gaisano states.

The Cebu branch may just as well serve as the litmus test for the restaurant chain as it is its first outside of Luzon. With its success will come the possibility of venturing further down south to the metro areas of Mindanao.

"Did you know that Cebu has always been the 'model' for the NCR? Area. Products, business-

GOTTEBLVE lessee and Jose Gaisano

Saving...

(Turn to page B4)

savers, which has since been catering to municipal government officials, employees and retirees.

In January 2002, however, the SLG, which Medina and Patricia helped form, defaulted after other members stopped their contributions.

Each member got P4,700 in accumulated savings.

With the amount, Marlene shifted to another business—selling vegetables and sliced fruits in stores such as supermarkets.

She says so is that the fruits don't bruised and packed in small cellophane bags so elementary pupils, her major customers, could afford them.

Marlene says she would net P60 each day. But she says she is happy about the "last turnover" of her investment.

Although the SLG she helped form dissolved, Marlene says that step and the discipline of saving.

"Saving at least P5 to P10 each day has become a habit for me," the new and thinner Bel says, whether earning big or small, more always save for the rainy day.

Lasting SLGs bloom

The SLGs in which Milagros and Marlene belonged were among 1,467 SLGs which Go-up helped organize in Ilocos, Mindoro, Bicol and Bulacan from 1997 to July 2003.

Of these SLGs, 470 or 36 percent of the original SLGs organized, have remained active, including 174 SLGs, which opted to become independent cash in the SLG to which Milagros of Dagupenses, Marlene belongs.

A total of 448 SLGs have since linked up with financial institutions as seven cooperatives, a rural bank and a non-government organization.

Other SLGs, such as the Dalidalo Multipurpose Cooperative featured in the first part of this series, have evolved into independent cooperatives.

While the other SLGs broke up, the SLGs that have persisted continue to innovate. Go-up co-founder Bel Chi Ideza and the other villagers-turned-savings and financing scale touch as microentrepreneurs have evolved into serving 10,000 households in coastal Caraballo interior villages.

If the Go-up personnel who helped start the SLG phenomenon, the Caraballo landscape left's economic difficulties, long tradition and culture of cooperation and many rural their industry are the battle grounds on which thousands of other SLGs will bloom.

"Through these savings and loan groups, we have seen how seemingly hopeless and powerless villagers can actually do something to improve their lot if given the opportunity," says Francis Dejos, Go-up's Cooperative development specialist.

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Sunday BIZ

Saving ₱20 a day creates loan system for Abra folk

The once deep and quiet Abra river is now tilled and greatly affected by the large-scale mining in Benguet. JOEY G. SALGADO

By Maurice Malanes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Second of two parts

DAGUIOMAN, Abra—Like thousands of Filipino women, Milagros dug sewer of this upland town had dreamed, after finishing high school, of a life better than that of her former parents.

Milagros joined the exodus of other Filipino women who worked in Hong Kong as a domestic helper.

That was 1983 and she was 21. She first went a two-year contract and planned to return home to start a business after saving enough capital.

But her money all went to loan payments. She continued to work in Hong Kong until 1994.

But she was not able to earn enough because she had to pay for loans she used for her placement and other fees.

She continued to work in the former British colony until 1994, earning P13,000 a month.

The Tinggian lady finally returned home when she decided to get married and take her own children, rather than take care of the children of some middle-class family in Hong Kong.

She wanted to go into a small business but could not. Representatives of the Central Cordillera Agricultural Program or Ceap came to Daguioman in 1997 to talk about a Grameen-inspired small rural financing system, through the organization of small savings and loans groups or SLGs.

A joint program of the European Union and the Department of Agriculture, Ceap, participated in second phase, began in 1996 and ended last July.

Milagros joined the training on organizing an SLG.

Now 44, she is part of a seven-member all-women SLG she helped put up in 1998.

The SLG started with P50 weekly savings from each member, who could borrow at least P500 after saving for three months.

To raise money for their savings and loans, Milagros and the other members saved and paid their dues in kind. They would bring their avocados, pomelos or grapefruits, papayas, bananas, string beans and other crops to their weekly meetings.

Members who had cash would buy the products so they would save the required P20 each week. Some could also pay their loan amortizations in kind.

Creating business

From what they learned from their SLG, Milagros and two other members created small businesses of their own. As members of the same SLG, Milagros and her colleagues decided which business to go into so they would not compete with each other.

Milagros concentrated on trading indigenous products like homemade vinegar and wine, honey, tobacco, bamboo crafts, ripe grass brooms and pine resin.

From her store, she earns P1.00 to P1.50 daily, which, she says, was not bad in a rural setting. Milagros' two other colleagues traded different goods, mostly groceries, which they bought wholesale from the provincial capital of Dangwad.

She and her colleagues also embarked on a lending business targeting none members outside their SLG.

They began their lending business when their savings reached P50,000. They started lending a maximum of P5,000 to members with a collateral, usually a rice field.

The maximum loan was soon raised to P10,000 and the usual collateral was a rice field that could produce 100 kilograms of milled rice in one cropping. With a 5 percent monthly interest, the loan was payable in six months. "By God's grace, our store and lending businesses continue to grow," says Milagros.

Through the SLG and the other businesses it helped create, Milagros said she did not have to lose money when she delivered her two babies through caesarian section.

"I also won't have to worry about their (her children's) school expenses," she says.

From nurse to entrepreneur

For many young Filipinos, a nursing course is a passport to working abroad.

This was what prompted Marlene Pangaoan of the upland town of Bucay, Mt. Province, to pursue a nursing course at Lyceum College in Tuguegarao City.

But after graduating in 1991, nursing jobs here and abroad were hard to come by for Marlene.

In 1995, she borrowed money and applied as a domestic in Taiwan.

After a three-year contract in Taiwan, she returned to Bucay and invested her savings in an eatery with a sing-along videoke bar. The business flopped.

Marlene was mulling setting up another business when Ceap personnel came to Bucay in 2001 to preach about micro finance by organizing savings SLGs.

Inspired by the Ceap staff's story about how village women in Bangladesh established their Grameen or village-based banks, Marlene was convinced and helped form and became a member of an SLG, the basic unit of village-based banking.

"If Bangladesh women succeeded [in their Grameen], I was certain we also could," she says.

As one of a five-member SLG, Marlene would save ₱5 a day to complete the ₱25 weekly savings for the SLG.

As was the policy, she availed of a ₱500 loan at 5 percent monthly interest only after continuously saving for three months.

With the loan, she set up a small business of selling fish balls, halo-halo and kakanin or rice cakes.

Doing this business for two years, she would earn ₱50 to ₱75 daily, which augmented her small okay-okay or second-hand clothes business.

Marlene's fellow members also opened up their own businesses.

Her colleague, Patricia Cenita, set up an

(TURN TO B2)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday LIFESTYLE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11,

Also Chela Batol-Fortuno

Coast is not clear—yet

DIVERS hauled debris from underwater in Anilao, Batangas, two years ago.

On Sept. 18, thousands of Filipino volunteers will again dive into the water and comb miles of shore to collect garbage

By Linda B. Bolos

LAST year, more than 140,000 Filipino volunteers covered almost 4,000 miles of coastal and underwater areas and collected close to two million pounds of garbage and debris.

The Philippines' pickup haul was second only to the United States' 3,710,242 pounds, but it also had the next largest number of volunteers and area of coverage after the 10/ 170,000 people spread over 11,257 miles.

In fact, in its 2005 International Coastal

CLEAN-U

IN THIS ISSUE

EIGHT pages of mouth-watering food talk

FAMILY penthouse, merrymaking spot

SEA Princess sprints to Athens

LOVE at second sight

Coast is not clear—yet

COLLECTED trash is sorted out into recyclables and non-recyclables.

CHILDREN and adults work together to clean a pile-filled stretch of coast.

CEBU City actively participated in IDC 2002.

STUDENTS do their share in cleaning up a riverside.

VOLUNTEERS with their haul of trash collected from the Puerto Princesa Port in IDC 2002.

Ocean report. The Ocean Conservancy, which spearheads the annual event, made special mention of the increase in Filipino volunteers from 69,000 in 2002 to 140,000.

Hopeful signs

Last year's figures also offered other hopeful signs for the Philippines, aside from the more than 50-percent increase in the number of volunteers.

In absolute terms, the 1,972,827.5 pounds of garbage collected by volunteers last year represented an increase of 868,239 pounds or 80 percent over the 2002 figure of 1,681,709 pounds. But the 2003 total laid from 3,977.9 miles of shores and underwater meant an average of 496 pounds of trash per mile. In 2002, with 1,570 miles covered, the average pounds per mile figure was just 1,071.

Despite this heartening development, however, the problem of trash dispersal into the sea, rivers and other watercourses remains serious. Floods after heavy rains due to poor drainage are the most obvious consequence, but trash in water bodies means more than just clogged waterways. It can also mean health risks for animals—both on land and in the water—and humans.

Entangled

In 2003, volunteers discovered 207 entangled animals, mostly birds, fishing nets were the most dangerous" items, catching over 10 percent of entangled animals. Plastic bags, rope and ballroom equipment durable threats to aquatic wildlife, ripping and sometimes even killing them.

Particularly birds that mistake glittery items, like plastic, for food, are also at risk. In several instances, they get their necks caught in plastic encased boxes or six-pack holders. Turtles have died from eating plastic bags, cigarette butts and other items carelessly thrown into the water by humans.

A BIRD died from getting entangled in a six-pack plastic holder.

Humans also at risk

People, too, who are the most primarily responsible for making water bodies unsafe, are not totally exempt from the harmful effects of the mess they make. In its report, The Ocean Conservancy pointed out:

"Marine debris is harmful to humans, too. It's dangerous for the divers and boaters who brave glass and similar debris, there are sharp or unseen threats as well. Medical and personal hygiene debris often enters the water stream through sewer systems, which can indicate the presence of invisible pollution and pathogens. Rashes can strike people exposed to the contaminated waters."

In the EU, the report said, there were 12,161 beach closings and advisories due to sewage waste in 2002.

Particularly, the message that water bodies are not convenient trash receptacles is beginning to sink in. Not only is the number of volunteers for the International Coastal Cleanup increasing, but even business is getting into the act.

In the Philippines, for instance, The Ocean Conservancy last year list Oil Supermall, Shell Express, Coca-Cola, Unilever, Jollibee, Phillips, General Electric, Associate Power, Wilcon Depot/Grocery and Nestea as the "heaviest sponsors."

Reduce garbage

Of course, rather than give volunteers something to collect every year, the best thing is for people to avoid unnecessarily throwing garbage into waterways. The Environmental Protection Agency suggests, among others:

- Reduce packaging by buying in bulk or concentrated products when possible.
- Reduce toxicity or learn how to recycle hazardous or use those with reduced amounts.
- Select reusable products. Sturdy, washable utensils, microwave, drink implants and disposable can be used many times.
- Use durable products. Choose hardware, sports equipment, toys and tools that will stand the test of time.
- Reuse products like newspapers, boxes, shopping "grocery" and bubble wrap.
- Buy products—bottles, cans, cereal boxes, containers and cartons—made from recycled material.
- Compost or leave lawn. Food scraps and yard waste can become natural soil conditioners.

This year's International Coastal Cleanup is scheduled for Sept. 18. For more information, visit The Ocean Conservancy website, www.oceanconservancy.org or the International Coastal Cleanup website, www.coastalcleanup.org, or e-mail ISAP-ncr@asa.dna.org or call 5367145 or fax 5367119.

A relaxed evening with young jazz ambassadors

THE UNITED States Embassy was the venue of a relaxed and congenial evening that featured the Chicago Jazz Quartet (one of eight ensembles selected as US jazz ambassadors) composed of young, talented musicians Benjamin Lewis on keys, Lorin Cohen on bass, Michael Rayner on drums and Matt Lewis on trumpet and lead vocals.

James gave a wonderful rendition of Louis Armstrong's "It's a Wonderful World" for the Oracle that has the audience clapping, swaying and asking for more. Three more guest renditions of "Sunny Boy" and "Memphis" at the Savoy." By the way, did you know—I didn't—that Charlie Chaplin wrote the melody of "Smile"?

DIPLOMATIC SWIRL

By Amelya

Among the guests were Hortensia Gamora and Yasmin Marshall, both top journalists, who're all set for his annual trip to NY, and no annual the wedding of the daughter of former US Ambassador Kris Kristofferson and the very popular Jamie O.C., together with Sheila Platt; Joan Oreinbaker and Bea Zobel; Toni Parsons, whose floral arrangements are so outstanding; Justice Undersecretary Hong Wednesdays; Chito and Anna Bengzon, ready for the first national competition for the Rizalenian Art and Design Excellence (formerly Young Painter's Award); me to make calls; Baby Denia (because she's always kind, another friend, Jackie calls her the Mother Teresa of Philippine journalism!); Babe Bernardino Jr., I didn't see about THAT exact; Jimmie Chan and his son Michael; Benedict Stevenson and Francis Herbert from the Swedish Embassy, who've come to my table to listen to discussing the Philippines.

Manila club isn't in Manila

It's becoming fashionable to hold parties in the Manila Polo Club that is no longer in Manila. The Antony San James's fourteenth now sits on 77 hectares of land in Canossa, Cavite.

Now why am I telling you this? Well, it was the venue for a unique and unusual fête despedida, narrowly for the popular German ambassador and wife, Reinhard and Michaelina Arns, hosted by Oscar Vince Carlos of the Consulate Corps of the Philippines.

Two special raves with top prizes were held: the Consular Cup and the Ambassador's Cup. Dean Castro, Monsito Conrad Fortunato Gutierrez, Singapore Consul Adrian Chan and US Consul James Culbertson presented consular to owners, trainers and jockeys of winning horses in the Consular Cup. Later, Ambassador Reinhard Kob of the European Union, Ambassador Zennaro of Bangladesh and Christian Vaughn of Belgium joined the fracas to presenting the Ambassador's Cup trophies.

Annual tea

The Catholic Women's Club held its annual Tea and the Monday Mass Club had a wonderful presentation of numbers from "My Fair Lady." The talented wife Chairperson Anna sang "Get the Sweet whole You Live," Leo Martinez did "Get Me to the Church on Time" and the lovely Myrna Sorrentino played the noble patriotic Eliza.

The ladies, led by past president Alice Bolomet, were decked out in Belle Epoque costumes and looked properly elegant, hats and all. I'm still be happy to know that the occasion was graced by none other than Malaki's former fiancé and now first lady again, Dr. Elizabeth Zobel, and the famous Governor Chavit and Ola Singson.

RP-Singapore artists

In celebration of Philippine-Singapore relations, Singapore Ambassador Lim Sheng Huat, one of our most supportive young Asian ambassadors, together with Ambassador and Private Art Pte. presented "Diptych," an exhibit of recent works of six budding artists (four between 1976 and 1978) from the Philippines and Singapore. The accomplished artists belong to the generation nurtured by connoisseurs and a global world. Artists Ezmeralda Portugal, Chiew Lee Shoon Shih, Ho Yea Nyew, Mel Yu, Lim Hsing Ee, and Billy Alvarez recollect "The church of the global, in electron, in energies that may be evidences of breakdown or the index of the beating diversity of markets and labor forces."

Lunch for ambassador

The hostess loved a lunch recently for Ambassador Pia Hughes. Present were hostess chair Khaled B. Prieto and president Mindy Bermudez, as well as Nin Abas, DCCI; Alan Qua and Jun Bai of the Chinese embassy; agency publisher Inquirer Bernice Charlie Sullivan; Francis Chua, vice president of the Chinese Federation and Betty Chua.

THE CHICAGO Jazz Quartet: Benjamin Lewis on keys, Lorin Cohen on bass, Michael Rayner on drums and Matt Lewis on the trumpet and lead vocals.

THE ZIPAS (above) and Michael Chan and his dad, Jose Mari Chan (below).

CELINE Bautista, Drs. Bong, Carmen Gaspar, Consuelo Prieto, Mercedes Gonzalez, Molly Cojuangco and Alice Besana.

TOASTED with Ambassador Reinhardt are Mr. Tomas Zita, president and chairman of the Shangri-La Plaza, and his wife Katherine.

TOASTED. Hmm. Hortensia Hubbard, Hmm. Gal Tangbo, Hmm. Sylvia Schiff and Hmm. Arlene Standing. Swedish Ambassador Annika Markovic, Hmm. Marianne Jess, Eva Cuyos

SEN Wei Hong, SVP, Keppel Philippines Properties; Marcos Paredes, DFA officer-in-charge Asia and Pacific Affairs; Haji Hasbi bin Haji Rusli, chargé d'affaires, Brunei Darussalam

THE hostess recently hosted a lunch for Clarion ambassador Pia Hughes (second from right), here with hostess host chair Maria Prieto, board member Charlie Bolivar (far right) and other members of the Clarion delegation.

So very worth the trip

By Greg Garcia

Everywhere in the world there is food that lingers in our memory and taste buds

WHEN enjoying a meal with friends who love good food, the conversation invariably goes to a recitation of the restaurants of our youth whose demise we collectively mourn. I often would mentally ask myself the question: were the foods we love to remember really that good? Or did they taste good only because our taste buds then were underdeveloped due to lack of exposure caused by (very very) limited financial resources. (Rice, chow, chook, didn't even the moneyed ones then have limited choices of restaurants?)

It is not when food was just bad, there really were outstanding places where food just refuse to desert my memory and taste buds.

The best tasting hotdog in New York is reputedly served by Gray's Papaya on 72nd Street and Broadway. The last time I was there gobbling two orders with mustard dripping, my mind did a total rewind that led me to Bristol Derby and its long-long hotdog. I may gone from 26th Avenue near the corner of Hoskins, Bristol Derby's hotdog was peppery, meaty and wrapped in brown cylindrical paper do not tasting bread. And, yes, it was a foot long.

It was without mustard or catsup; it was a meal to enjoy like me, Bristol Derby's hotdog beats Gray's Papaya's hotdog by a mile... or at least by a foot!

Rimonde doughnuts

My fascination with Krispy Kreme and its overrollers had commenced. (In Batu, must have to move to Henry's donuts. Once located at the foot of Jones Bridge, my classmates in Lyceum and I would cross the bridge every time an hour 45 minutes to blow and wait in Henry's. It was not your usual doughnut there, which tended to be chewy like rice bibingka. It's they still have Indian kiss — never-ever-day!) Henry's doughnut seemed to every bite. But its distinctiveness came from the special syrup that came with every order. It was a cross between honey, treacle and chocolate. You poured the sauce on top of the doughnut. And then, heaven.

'Siopao' was Ma Mon Luk

My Mon Luk siopao had a bun that was plump, smooth to excess and light to the bite. Its unlike the small, meagre-to-forget siopao of today. Comparatively speaking, Ma Mon Luk siopao is like a D-cup while the Luk Yuen of the world would be to A. Sounds like a brag? I think the bun, the "manok galing Bataan," or the insane pamura proudly proclaimed, inconsistently executed with an egg while gilding your mouth with an adobo-like taste. There is a place where you can still enjoy Ma Mon Luk siopao in its original form and taste. It's called Rimonde and it's on Benavidez Street in Binondo. (Don't expect air-conditioning, though.)

But I asked myself: What would I be drooling about in my old age when my now-developed taste buds might be re-attuned by health restrictions?

Like, steak.

The steak that turned me into a steak lover was Alfredo's. In that dark age when Monterey and Sam's were mining, healthy, Alfredo's had their own cows to serve on their dining tables. Their steaks could be best described as mature and not bland.

I surreptitiously asked a waiter I had befriended to share with me the restaurant's secret. I expected a list of herbs and spices, but he blurted out only one ingredient: Kaiser. (Believe it or not.) I have since tried it out on grilled Angus rib eye and my guests think I do great steaks.

Best steak

Nice to hear but the best steak for me is in Brooklyn at Peter Lugers.

The first time I was there I asked the waiter why he was letting the plate's corner stand on an lowered saucer. He gave me this "you're-so-hokay look" and said curtly, "So you can enjoy the steak's dripping."

And true enough, the two-inch porterhouse, well-marbled, dry-aged and grilled to help cow perfection, with its accompanying drippings was worth the investment in crawling here.

Or to borrow a phrase from the French Michelin guide, *ça vaut le voyage*. It's worth the trip.

There are other supposedly better steakhouses in New York, like Sparks or Post House, but only Peter Lager deserves a pilgrimage.

Jeffrey Steingarten, Vogue magazine's food critic and author of the book, "It Must've Been Something I Ate," wrote that of the 78 top restaurants in the United States only two passed a stringent test he devised. (Like, how many of them dry-aged their USDA Prime beef for five weeks or longer?).

Of course, Peter Lager's was one of only two! The other one is Gene's Steak House in Tampa.

Last Howard, a student of 20 years or so at Peter Lager, texted Wolfgang Zwiey du Steingaga, real up- as restaurateur?) managed to interest some investors and put up a Peter Lager copy in midtown Manhattan. (They accept credit cards; Peter Lager does not.)

But why settle for a copy when you can have the original? Incidentally, Peter Lager also serves what might be the best pecan pie in New York.

Best veal

The two other restaurant delights that are "*ça vaut le voyage*" can be found in Marseille in Rome and Casa Paco in Madrid.

Marseille is on Via Sistina, two blocks from Via Veneto. My family and I went there really for their antipasti assortment. The vegetable appetizers in large bowls from which everybody helps himself is not-to-be-missed. And their primi of three different pastas.

While enjoying the pasta, I was distracted by the sight and aroma of what looked like[illegible] from the corner of my eye, an occasional [illegible] devastating being enjoyed by a couple near table. I asked the waiter what might that be and he proudly proclaimed, "The best veal in the world." I had to go back to Marseille the next night with nothing in mind but "the best veal in the world." It was.

Since then, Marseille has been one of the three reasons I always want to go back to Rome.

Casa Paco is on Puerta Cerrada, about two minutes from Plaza Mayor. Here you get the thickest, juiciest and tastiest steaks in Spain, priced according to weight.

Señor Paco starts his steak in boiling oil before serving them on plates so hot that the almost raw steak continues to cook at your table, preserving the natural juices. (And no, he does not use flour.)

Such versatility, all I can do nowadays is hibernate over Peter Lager, Marseille or Casa Paco while feeling depressed with the condition's sad plight. Thankfully, there's to Scarfillo and its pepperoni steak. When you next your son's late-night tuna sandwich attack, you taste the creamy yet light sauce and after a two-second delay the delicious kick of pepper takes over. Makes you wonder what might the world of food be if the world did not have pepper.

Sometime, with everybody hollering for a micro summer lifestyle, the thought of feasting on gastronomic delights will momentarily remain just that — a thought.

Paradise found

VIEW from the top. Ginger Hill's garden

(FROM TOP) Zucchini flowers from the Salcedo Market harvested, brushed and topped with goat cheese, portobello and shitake mushrooms, cornichon flowers, arugula, roasted asparagus, anchovi and grape tomatoes from the oven

TABLE FOR. At what is the opposite end of a mango orchard, ruby hibiscus grass and bougainvillea from the garden, is the main room from Dimasalang and Mia. Grass boat as centre, made of fiber, is flanked by stone lanterns from Bali. Crinkled bamboo plate trays are Jamie's design. Cutlery from Bangkok, tissue holder DIY

CHILLED Bottles of wine, grey greens and dark in the proper outdoor party mood

A beach is the perfect setting for a relaxing feast

Text and photos by J. Gamboa

JANE Rodriguez's Batangas house was the perfect setting for a laidback afternoon by the beach. A wood-burning brick oven was fired up for cooking house-made pizzas. Our hungry crew also enjoyed the Asian salads and oven-baked vegetables.

Jane's table for 10 was dressed, using trays, from her travels and flowers from her garden. Food talk was the order of the day, with the only acceptable interruption being a cool dip or an afternoon siesta.

At the end of the day, we came away with an unbelievable lightness of being, plus the recipes to share with our readers.

Jane's Mandarin Chicken Salad with Sesame Vinaigrette

Blanch greens, cut to bite strips
Coarsely chopped fresh cilantro sprigs
Chopped green onions
Celery, sliced into little matchsticks
Toasted slivered almonds
Fried wonton noodles
Mandarin oranges, peeled, sliced and some white membrane cut out

To cook chicken, combine ¼ c freshly squeezed mandarin orange juice, 2 tbsp oil, honey and 2 tbsp soy sauce. Using oil slippery or brandy and 2 tbsp cornstarch. Brown ½ kg of chicken breast (skinned, deboned and cut into ½" strips) in a hot oiled wok or pan. When the chicken has browned, give the orange juice mixture a quick whisk and throw into the pan. Stir to simmer until it is very thick and bubbly. Remove from heat and sprinkle toasted sesame seeds and orange zest on chicken.

To make the dressing, in a big bowl combine:

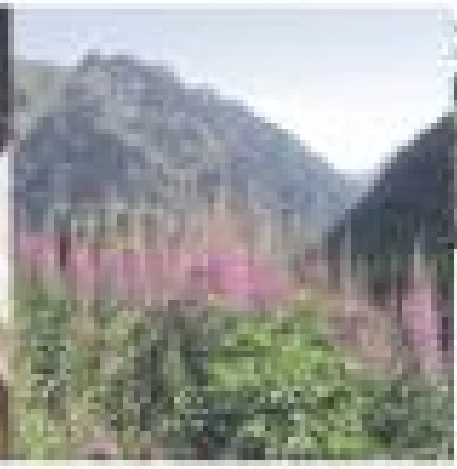
¼c unseasoned rice wine vinegar
1/3c sugar
1 tbsp honey
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
2 cloves garlic, pressed in a mortar
1 tbsp grated ginger
1 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper

Allow to marinate for 15 minutes or so. Then, while continuously whisking with a wire whisk, add ¾ c sesame oil in a slow, steady stream. Then do the same with ¼ c olive oil.

(FROM TOP) Roasted asparagus, zucchini and grape tomatoes, shaved parmesan, edible flowers and truffle oil pizza, the rich in making good pizza is to limit a bit of wood before hand and get it to 350°. Only start cooking when the fire is red and you are left with embers. (left) Jane's Mandarin Chicken Salad with Sesame Vinaigrette

PRETTY Sesame oil, chili spiced tomato, basil and pecorino

THE CREW (clockwise) Stacy Rodriguez, Lara Carpo, J. Gamboa, Jane Rodriguez and Joey Carpo



(RIGHT) Ledoux du jour s'is Perigord, the bread basket of Richard and "Rue Lyonnais", summer leisure in the Pyrenees. Fernando and Cyrille with le Chef de Lumière Michel Chevalier

A mouth-watering travel

Text by Fernando Arruabarrena
Photos by Cyrille Lesueur

FROM THE FABULOUS city of Lights, Paris, to the grand peaks, valleys and lakes of the beautiful mountain chain of the French Pyrenees and to the foie gras and truffle rich countryside of Perigord, it was a chef's journey of discovery, flavours, culture, wines and that all-chance that someone might ask you to cook a lobster for them. Strange things have happened, believe us.

Here are some culinary highpoints that Cyrille Lesueur and I experienced on our last trip to France. Bon appetit.

Restaurant Rue Lyonnais'

The owners were so nice loved it so much it open and with your eyes closed, taste and take in the aromas. This was sage advice from eight-year-old Cassandra, daughter of Cyrille and Anne Sophie. We were having lunch at Alain Ducasse's fantastic "Rue Lyonnais" in Paris. A grand bistro featuring the specialties of Lyon by chef de cuisine David Rathgeber. Cyrille's old friend from his days in The Ritz Hotel and also at Le Grand Intercontinental in Paris.

Chef David's menu was small, well-chosen and featured what are only in season. Salade chanterelle or girolle mushrooms, it came in our mid of the meals, was to a few hours, the last being an egg that gently cooked to three point with a rich creamy sauce. Artisan sausages and pasta as charcuterie in the next [illegible] were presented with delicious [illegible] potatoes, boiled eggs and a simple mustard sauce. I tried also [illegible] with foie gras and marinated egg yolk[illegible]. Simple flavoured but very rich and satisfying. The veal dough breadcrumb that came with the rice accompanied Cyrille but stuffed spring vegetables that had baby radish, [illegible] spring onions and baby carrots served in a small pot. A typical spring dish seasoned with [illegible] oil [illegible] oil and freshly ground pepper.

LOVELY lovely grand foie

A classic bistro lunch, a Michelin bout, and a Pinoy fiesta in France make for unforgettable gustatory adventures

ogue

ROASTED langoustines with citrus emulsion in Ledoyen prepp the socalled Michelin restaurant Ledoyen in Paris

But the main course we chose (sautéed sea bass with fennel and a big rib-eye steak with fresh morel mushrooms and baby potatoes and roasted with garnishes. The sea bass dish was accompanied by fresh tomato and fresh bread. The consistency of the fresh bread (heritage grain mixed) in the middle flavored fish and the outward cracked bread underneath. The main was a hefty piece good for two (otherwise what plate will be loaded by gentle manipulation and cooking juices. A deceptively simple dish but very hearty in flavor and substance. The crunchy garnishes were soft and light, flowing on crayfish sauce). Cyrille liked it very much.

We ruled the Saint-Marcellin for the cheese course and I loved it. It had that great funky aroma and flavor. We say to be scraping the cheese out of the soft's crisp containment. Its delicious rubbed toasted baguette. It was very good. For my desserts we had a sampling of what was on the menu. Cherry clafoutis and a ode of grapefruit was a nice final escape, anise dish that are good. I really enjoyed the rhubarb and strawberry crisp. It's a classic composite of fresh rhubarb and strawberries topped with a sweet biscuit/cookie crust and some homemade ice cream. We also had a chocolate bonbons dessert (chocolate-ish and tasty).

This was a classic bistro lunch. The menu showed the menu and it made perfect sense. The flavors were uncomplicated and honest. The vegetables were unusually savory and pronounced. The mushrooms were delicate and lovely. The sausages and pates were light and filled with confidence. The bread, oh my god, the bread. Crst superbe! This bistro rocks! What a pleasure to have experienced the cuisine of chef David Rathgeber.

Ledoyen

After spending the day with my old friends Mickey, Johnny, Dennis and Geoffy in Beaujolais Rouge Pistis where adult happy meals consists of a bowling, pommes frites (French fries) and a beer, we were off to see the wizard—the wonderful wizard of the three-star Michelin restaurant, Pavillon Ledoyen, chef the cuisines Christian Le Squer. Chef Le Squer was Cyrille's mentor where they worked in the kitchens of both The Ritz and Le Grand Hotel.

There are only a handful of three-star Michelin restaurants in Europe and Ledoyen in Paris is one of the frontrunners. The restaurant is on what Cyrille proudly calls the most beautiful street in the world, the Champs-Elysees. I couldn't agree more. A lush and blooming garden surrounded the restaurant and savoured the busy traffic close by. The interiors were subdued and pleasing. It had a quiet, modern yet elegant atmosphere around it. Nothing ostentatious or overboard, the dining room was dominantly French and well appointed.

Arriving to for dinner was Cyrille's wife, Anna, and his friend, Jose Claude. We were served champagne cocktail drinks and small bites of savory morsels or amuse bouche. The bite size in ingredients and the studied refined cuts were exceptionally good. Menus were offered to each one of us, but only Cyrille's fellow had prior because he was the host of our party. It was still opting and she opportune was a showcase of the best of the season. Quality over quantity was the rule here. There was an à la carte selection and an offer that read "The discovery of specialties—the most great pleasure, allow chef Christian Le Squer to be your guide through a special five course menu." Sir knights it!

All four of us took the degustation of chef Le Squer and we were all quietly excited.

The formals they presented were amazing in variety and one of the seriously fine was a deep black bread roll made with squid ink and shrimp essence. Another was mirace like puff pastry with thousands of tasty layers studded with assorted bacon. The breads were fantastic!

Then dinner was served. The first course was a presentation of lovely tomato (raw) with avocado, summer corn and olive oil. It was refreshing, lightly tart, which balanced with the bold flavor of the fish tart. Several rich, rice dish was a nice jump start for the main feeds. For the second course, chef Le Squer presented a simple plate of roasted langoustine from Brittany. The waiters served the entrée selection from a to station to each of our plates. As the dishes is uncovered every one has langoustine is cooked and slowly melts in glaze. The fresh aromas of the emulsion was a perfect welcome to the savory almost delicate flavor of the langoustine, a cracks of "real pieces on the side of the plate gave an herbal and aromatic bouquet to what I consider as for by far one of the most delicious dishes I have tasted. I wanted to do back-flips of joy.

Spider crab was served for our third course. This was an interesting dish. It was a deconstruction and a reconstruction of the spider crab. Sounds daft? Okay let me explain. It's a spider crab dish filled with crab meat, fresh sage (quinoa) and caviar; topped with crab essence foam and garnished with crab bit "chips" and seaweed sprouts. It was both beautiful and delicious. From a chef's point of view this is not the easiest thing to do. The fourth course was lobster from Brittany (like the last guarantee) with sweet pea risotto and jamaican wine sauce. The flavors were subdued and clean. The lobster was delicious.

An interesting green apple sorbet with cauliflower fruit was served next. By this time we were ready for our sixth course, dessert (warm plates were served, too instead of a soufflé we had a beautiful and profusely sliced tea loaf with fresh almonds, gentle mushrooms and a green herb jus. The fish was almost airy light and flaky. The sauce was grassy and fresh in flavor. The perks of knowing the chef has its advantages, and Cyrille knew chef Le Squer very well.

On our seventh course we weren't surprised when chef Le Squer sent out one of Ledoyen's signature specialties. Roasted cocoa an emulsified caramel pastries and a truffle butter sauce, it was to drool spend. The cuchon filled was particular that lying slowly into the luxurious sauce of truffles and the roughness of the pastries for a subtle textural contrast, texture.

Semillon wine the red wine was being poured into our glass, so, we know chef Le Squer still had something to show us. Interesting theory. I said duck and Cyrille said lamb. Cyrille was. Lamb loin frost. Limousin served with a terrine de jus and a medley four pieces gentle selection. The meat was tender and the juices punchy with flavor soothed well with the lamb.

Small mignardise (pre dessert treat) were served and desserts followed. We had two desserts to try. One was a grapefruit sorbet served in between layers of crisp basil crumpet with hot fruit pastry puffs on the side and fresh grapefruit segments and another was a crispy chocolate soufflé with spun sugar and chocolate stick cigarettes. I loved both desserts.

After a few encores we finally met the wizard, chef Christian Le Squer. He was very happy that we enjoyed the food and he stayed and chatted with us for some time.

What an excellent meal. What an incredible experience. Christian Le Squer really is a wizard and is a class act to boot.

Fiesta in Perigord

A fiesta was planned by Cyrille's brother, Thierry Sanders, at his home in Limoges in the Perigord region. Thierry had lived in the Philippines a few years ago, working as a furniture designer in Cebu. He has come to rate Cyrille and Anna many times and knows our culture very well.

For this fiesta he really wanted to have Cebuano style lechon to perfect with the typical signature fare of Perigord. Being true gastronauts, Cyrille and I convinced Thierry to go for gold and make it a true Filipino fiesta complete with a full Filipino menu to go with the lechon. Thierry was ready to convince and agreed.

We quickly made the menu and came up with a list of Pinoy specials. We had to be ready for substitutes because finding the right ingredients wouldn't be an easy.

So for appetizers we made fresh lumpia using Vietnamese rice paper as our wrapper. We made Adobo we sells using salmon and monkfish. A salad of chopped veg. cashew with dark confit and spicy nuoc vinaigrette. This was inspired by the Chop Chop Salad in Cebu. For the main courses we cooked a beef short rib adobo complete with fried bananas as a garnish. Chicken inasal was also in the bullet and we every made drumstick style cuts (simple atmosphere garnish) were cooked with sugar cane juice and French mushrooms and pan-fried with garlic fried rice or kalo-kalo was done using arborio oil for that "fusion" tailless look.

The pièce de résistance was of course the lechon. It was Cyrille's first time to do a lechon. He, theoretically, I "smoked" people do lechon since I was a boy in Sagada. So true experience but mostly we became an "expert." We stuffed the pig with all-star onions, garlic, green onions, lemongrass, bay leaves, black peppercorns and plenty of rock salt. Brown a long metal spike through and got ready to roast the pig. Jean-Claude and his friend rented the oven, which

OUT FOR LUNCH with the Sanders in Boucon's Aux Lyonnais

we christened Le Chef de Lumineux, were in charge of the roasting pit. So there under the shade of the pear and apple trees, a French-born pig was lovingly roasted by a Welsh chef in his served in a Pinoy dinner buffet. Primo Bruhy!

Sixty people came for dinner. Relatives from as far as Paris drove down for the fiesta. Old friends and new ones started long tables filled with beautiful wine flowers, candles and rustic shell lanterns all done by Bernard. Like the food, the decor and look of the party was a true Pinoy and French fusion.

And everybody had a great time. For some it was the first time they tasted Filipino food and they loved it. Then it was time for the grand finale of Cyrille's masterpiece lechon. There was applause, oohs and aahs. We made three smacs for the occasion—sinuman, a Irish distillery and whisky grain mustard. Everybody was thrilled to see and finally taste the lechon.

Cyrille, Anna, Thierry and I had a blast putting the dinner together, but like both at home and every where else, food brings people together. Bayanan ground as simple are always far more wonderful when shared with the company of friends and loved ones. Cooking these treasures an additional pleasure.